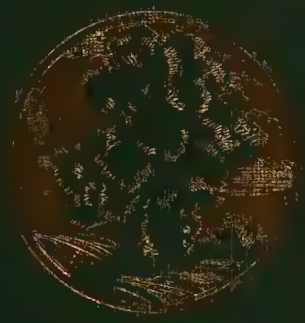

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THE ENGLISH INN

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY A. P. HERBERT

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by

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INTRODUCTION

THERE shall be no polite formality about this introduction. I make it with enthusiasm, really anxious that you should meet Mr. Burke's excellent little book. Until I read it I thought that I knew something about the English Inn. Now I am ashamed to mention the subject in his company. In the fascinating chapter, "A Fireside Tour," discussing the good and the bad in the Inn world, he tells us, "I myself have personal knowledge of a hundred and twenty-two delightful places." Few of us, I think, could name as many as twenty. And he really knows them—knows and loves them—but with good sense and proportion. Good sense—I emphasise that. For our inns and taverns have perhaps brought more nonsense into print than any other subject. Observe, for example, how Mr. Burke deals with the "romantic" nonsense, with those "who see a Corner House as vulgar, and an old carrier's house as romantic. I am out of my depth with them. I do not cherish the inn because it gives me the feeling of the past: the life of the present is, and always was, much more stimulating and satisfying. . . . Wonder is everywhere about us. Events are perpetual; and when I sit down to dinner in a fifteenth-century inn I am aware of no sense of the 'romance' that these people mean; only of a satisfying sense of the immediacy of events, in that I am doing something that Richard III, Samuel Pepys, Daniel Defoe, Jonathan Swift, David Garrick, William Hogarth, Sir Walter Scott and Charles Dickens did in that very inn the other day."

Again, "By a tour from inn to inn you may make a connected study of domestic architecture from the fourteenth century to the twentieth. . . . By following the list at the beginning of Chapter II you will find not only some beautiful specimens of period work but also some delightful tracts of country that may be new to you. And you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are doing something sensible; studying fact and not romance."

Many, I think, will be tempted, not by Chapter II only, to go with so sane a guide on a tour of the English inns. Their names alone have given me an itch to go inn-hunting—*The Civil Usage; You Might As Well; The Trip to Jerusalem; No Hurry; The Sea Horse; The Black Boy and Stomach-Ache; The Barge Aground; The Razor and Hen; The Flatiron and Frog;* and—perfect title, as Mr. Burke points out—*The Open Arms.* "Perhaps," he says, "the excellent landlord who invented that title originated also the delightful custom of giving names to rooms instead of cold numbers. Those are inns to remember. How pleasant to go up to bed to the *Merrie Wives.* How pleasant to have the boy enter the lounge with 'Telegram for Love-in-a-mist!' 'Parcel for William and Mary,' or to call for 'Chivalry!' instead of 'Number Twen-tee-two!' Pleasant, too, to hear the waiter pass your wine-order: 'Bottle-eighty-four-slightly-chilled-fer Midsummer Night's Dream!'" Pleasant, indeed: but most of us have never discovered or dreamed of such pleasant places. Mr. Burke's book is not a guide-book—it is "a revelation."

He does not disdain fancy, you see, though he may bludgeon the bogus "romancers." But good sense is the key-note of his pages. "'All good novels,' said Augustine Birrell, 'are full of inns.' . . . The reason is obvious: the inn is the finest focal point for the observation of men and manners. . . . And those

writers who shun the inn and the tavern reveal in their work their limited knowledge of human types and their ignorance of how men really think and talk and behave in the moments when they are truly themselves. It is everybody's place, a place, too, where men are more relaxed than they are in their own homes. The man of ten-thousand a year dines at the next table to the holidaying clerk of two-hundred a year, both of them within ear-shot of the tap-room labourers of twenty-five shillings a week; and in the bar the nobleman ceases to be a nobleman and the peasant ceases to be a peasant. Both become men. Only in the inn can this happen. It was one of our first social institutions, and it has outlasted many that appeared to be of greater value."

Mr. Burke might have added to the ignorant shunners of inns and taverns some of the politicians and parsons—though it is not the parsons' fault. Amazing, by the way, that the parson is forbidden by the rules of his cloth to "frequent taverns": for if the tavern is deplorable, then it should surely have a place upon his daily visiting-list; and if it is not, then, as Mr. Burke says, it is there that he can best learn how the people think and talk. The politicians and social reformers have no canon laws to excuse their shunning; either they are ashamed to visit the ancient institution with which they perpetually meddle or indolently permit others to meddle, or intellectual arrogance keeps them out. So they are ignorant; and if forty Licensing Commissions were to sit for forty years they would be as ignorant as before, because they will not consider the tavern inside the tavern with their fellow-men, but stand outside or sit in Whitehall, muttering inhuman phrases about "redundancy" and "licensed premises," and think they know their subject when they have got by heart the annual statistics of cirrhosis of the liver.

So they are ignorant; and noble legislators rise up in the House of Lords and say that the danger of the pub is that the landlord has an interest in plying his customers (never in my life have I seen a publican persuading, even indirectly, a customer to drink). So we have zealous meddlers who see nothing but "alcohol" in the poor man's meeting-place—the "public home," as I prefer to call it—and dare to compare our English inns and taverns with the saloons of Chicago! Ignorance—wanton ignorance. There was never much excuse for it; and now that Mr. Burke has written this book there will be none. Mr. Burke includes in his commended list the charming old "*Doves*" Inn of Hammersmith. I wish he would travel half a mile further on along the river one summer evening, and visit the *Black Lion*, with it's well-kept garden—gay with flowers and children and dogs—and darts and skittle-alley in the open air. I am proud to be the President of the Black Lion Skittle Club; and that distinction shall appear in the next edition of *Who's Who*, for I am not ashamed of "frequenting taverns." "Skittles?" Ah, beer and skittles. All the anti-pub people I know are acquainted with that phrase, as they are with "publicans and sinners," but not one of them has seen a skittles match; and not one of them will come to see it, though I have invited them over and over again. They prefer to gather in sleek committees, murmuring their soulless incantations about "alcohol." The Licensing Justices of a certain district announced the other day that the playing of darts and dominoes in public houses was to be forbidden. Did any Member of the House of Commons put down a Question about that gross, and perhaps unlawful, impertinence? Did any politician care? Most of them do not know enough.

Perhaps Mr. Burke's little book will lighten their darkness. But I must leave this sore subject, or it will

be supposed, quite wrongly, that his book is a narrow polemic. These matters are incidental only to this volume, which, after all, is principally about the inn and not the tavern. He rates the bad inn as roundly as he commends the good. Read him about cooking, the wine-list, and management in general. Read page 147 upon the rigorous moral examination which a would-be publican must pass. "You can go," says his friend the publican, "into almost any business with only half the examination you have to go through before you can take a pub. There's rogues in every business except the one business that the righteous look down on." And then read page 161. The morals of a landlord are examined with a microscope, but no one bothers about his technical qualifications—"a business for which no training is considered necessary." Queer. But the explanation is the same. Ignorance, indolence, and the wrong proportions. Mr. Burke supplies the knowledge, whips up our interest, and gives us everything in their right proportions. I thank him for this little book and most heartily commend it to the English people.

A. P. Herbert.

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Along the varying road of Life,
In calm content, in toil or strife;
At morn or noon, by night or day,
As time conducts him on his way,
How oft doth man, by Care oppress'd,
Find in an inn a place of rest?
Where'er his fancy bids him roam,
In every inn he finds a home.

WILLIAM COMBE.

THE ENGLISH INN

CHAPTER I

IN THE YARD

TO write of the English inn is almost to write of England itself, so closely is the inn woven with the daily life of men of every degree, and with the gradual development of our land. It is as familiar in the national consciousness as the oak and the ash and the village green and the church spire. It began when we began, for the nationhood of a country begins with its roads; and although the birth of the English inn cannot be documented, we may say with certainty that when the first fifty miles of road was cut through England the first English inn was born. Once the roads were made, the face of England began to stir with life, and wherever this life moved the inn was there, throbbing with a turmoil of dialects and manners. Merchants, pilgrims, warriors, thieves, scholars, pedlars—all these made its custom then as their counterparts do to-day.

As the people grew, the inn grew with them. Like our houses and our government, it has always reflected the temper and tastes of the time, and the old inns that remain to us are, in themselves and their accumulated story, far more valuable historical monuments than our castles and abbeys. For they are not relics; they are current companions of the unbreaking pageant of the English people. They are as much a part of the social furniture of the Englishman as his home and his garden, for next to the home, no other institution has held such continuous and intimate contact with him. The

stereotyped testimonial in the Visitors' Book—"a home from home"—means what it says. Although they are places of public resort, for the receipt and entertainment of travellers, in their snugness and their sense of enclosed family life they are the English home at one remove. The traditional and still-surviving terms for innkeeper and traveller—"host" and "guest"—are not without significance. Our inns are scarcely public places in the sense that railway stations, Town Halls and museums are public places. They are semi-private. We know that they are commercial undertakings; yet in a good inn we have, and should have, the feeling of making one at the home of a family who are keeping open house in the manner of the old squire on feast-days. Indeed, the rules for proper behaviour in inns, published in a sixteenth century broadside, insist upon the dignity of the innkeeper and the respect due to his house:

> Our Saviour in the Gospel commends the use of Inns. Yea, Christ Himself by His own presence did sanctify the use of Inns by eating His Passover there.
>
> It must not be accounted a small matter to afford house room, lodging, rest and food to the comforts of God's children. Though your house (as an Inn) be open for all men to come unto, yet account honest men your best guests.
>
> Because your guests be God's children, and their bodies the members of Christ, let their usage for meat, lodging, diet and sleep be such as becomes worthy personages.
>
> Content yourselves with an honest gain, so using your guests as they may have an appetite to return to you when they are gone from you.
>
> And for the guests, use an Inn not as your own house, not to dwell in, but to rest for such time as ye

have just and needful occasion, and then to return to your own families.

Eat and drink for necessity and strength; not for lust. At table let your talk be powder'd with the salt of heavenly wisdom, as your meat is season'd with material and earthly salt. Above all, abhor all oaths, cursing and blasphemy.

The sense of open house is stressed by the individuality of inns. They have their personal appearance and their atmosphere, and, despite the likeness, you could no more mistake the *Angel* at Grantham for the *George* at Glastonbury, than you could mistake one friend's sitting-room for another friend's. The hotels of our great cities are more or less of a standard, and afford little scope for the manager's quiddity, but the inn is as sharp-flavoured as the local "characters" in its tap-room. Even inns of the same town and the same period cannot be mistaken for each other. They have been nursed by men of various hue, who have drawn to them men of their like, and their character is tinct by centuries of idiosyncratic colouring. They are as much the distinctive works of their line of owners as the paintings of a given artist, or the hats of Mr. Churchill, are *his*. One thing only they have in common—the elusive but always perceptible quality of Englishness. They are the Englishman in his expansive moments—warmth and richness worn with a casual, deprecatory air; with the difference that their expansiveness is not limited to close friends but is for all mankind that pass that way.

And what of English mankind has *not* passed their way and received their hospitality? Every rank of society from king to beggar, criminal to judge, has lodged and still lodges within their doors, and every aspect of English life has been and is reflected there. Besides their immediate business of entertaining the

traveller, their status has made them adaptable to a hundred purposes and occasions. They have lent themselves to Royal Courts, assize courts, witenagemotes, council chambers, court leets, vestry halls, plotting parlours, and rent courts; their yards presented the first music-hall, and, later, the first playhouse; and to-day they still hold coroner's inquests, auction sales, commercial exhibitions, balls and assemblies; and play a paternal part to their neighbourhood as the headquarters of friendly societies, debating societies, slate clubs, cycling clubs, bowling clubs, and as freemasons' lodges. Indeed, they can be, and are, put to any use that the social fashions of the time demand. Existing as refuge for the chance traveller, they are also the centre of the life of their town or village, and the daily resort of its residents. They hold its unbroken story. In them the past fed by the present remains in constant bloom, and their two-, three-, or four-hundred years of story are but one story that is longer to-day than it was yesterday.

To perceive the continuity of their life you have only to read some inn scene of the past. The fourteenth-century tavern scene in *Piers Plowman*, where Glutton meets Cis the shoe-maker, Watt the game-keeper, Tom the tinker, Hick the hackney-man, Daw the Ditcher, and Bet the butcher, is, with altered speech and clothing (and a little more decorum), a tavern scene in any country town of to-day. And the meeting of the Penny Club in Ben Jonson's *New Inn* is a meeting of any Farthing Club or Diddlers' Club in a modern public-house—the same sort of chit-chat, the same sort of persiflage and repartee. And the inn-yard scene of *Henry IV* is still being acted to-day in yards that were existing then:

Second Carrier: This house is turned upside down since Robin Ostler died.

First Carrier: Poor fellow, never joyed since the price of oats rose. It was the death of him.
Second Carrier: I think this must be the most villainous house in all London Road for fleas.
Gadshill: I prithee, lend me thy lantern to see my gelding in the stable.
First Carrier: Nay, by God, soft; I know a trick worth two of that, i' faith.
Gadshill: I pray thee, lend me thine.
Second Carrier: Ay, when? Canst tell? Lend me thy lantern, quoth he. Marry, I'll see thee hanged first.

The men are differently clothed, and are dealing with motor-lorries in place of pack-horses; but the complaint is the same and the accent is the same, and the confused, vigorous life of the yard is the same. Despite the changes that have washed-in the boundaries of our different social ranks, there is one rank that is little different from its fellow of four hundred years ago: the casual workman. The colloquialisms of many of the minor trades of to-day are born of the same vocabulary that served it in the fifteenth century. The continuity of, for example, the trades of chair-making, flint-knapping and farming, are but a reflection of the continuity of the story of the people, and the inn is our most accessible observation-point of this living past-present.

Their yards have seen litters and palanquins; post-chaises and carriers' waggons, sedan chairs, stage-coaches and mail-coaches; bone-shakers, hobby-horses, penny-farthings and safety bicycles; the railway-station fly and the omnibus; steam-carriages, motor-bikes, the first Panhard and the latest Rolls-Royce and Ford; and soon they will see (maybe have seen) the baby 'plane. Their halls have seen halberds, pikes, staves, swords, blunderbusses, shepherds' crooks, walking-sticks,

umbrellas, golf clubs, tennis rackets and cricket-bats. Their bedrooms have seen ruffs, jerkins, doublets and hose, cloaks, powdered wigs, breeches, Wellingtons, beavers, bowlers and plus-fours. Their kitchens and dining-rooms have held the odours of squab-pies, venison-pasties, eel-pies, herring-pies, pigeon-pies, umble pies, and ham-pies; lampreys, sprats, spurlings, stewed carp and roast pike; chitterlings, lobscouse, conies, capons, stubble-geese, woodcock, curlew, snipe and swan (still served on ceremonial occasions at the *Maid's Head* at Norwich); collard head, ox-cheek, boar's head, neats' tongues, and sucking-pig; tansy-cakes, hasty pudding, frumenty, syllabub and cheese-cakes; and now hold the odours of chops, steaks, cutlets, and the eternal soup, fried plaice, joint, fruit, and cheese. Their bars have served sack, canary, hippocras, metheglin, Rhenish, malmsey, purl, rumbo, lamb's wool, negus, shrub, clove, lovage, perry, egg-flip, bishop, muscadine, spruce, rum-and-milk, ale, stout, whisky, brandy, colonial burgundy, and cocktails. They have known us in every stage of our social development; they have touched every nook and corner of our daily lives and habits.

In the inn, not in the churchyard, is the history of the parish, and whenever I visit a town or village strange to me, I do not make for the church, as my guide-book orders me to do; I make for the inn. Most guide-books seem to assume in the intelligent tourist no interest save ecclesiastical architecture and monumental brasses. These things have their place, but my first desire on arriving at a town is not to discover whether the church is Perp. or Dec. or E.E., as their jargon has it, but to catch the active genius that marks it from other towns. So I go to the inn. The church's story is of what was—and only faintly of that, for it murmurs mainly of old knights and squires, and not at all of the important

matter, the people. But the inn's story is of what was and what is, with foreshadowings of what will be. It has had far closer contact than the church with the men of its town, and by gentle eavesdropping from the parlour we may hear of the present life of that place, and get as clear a view of its traditional life, as any mouldering stones or dumb brasses can give us. It is the centre of things. All threads of interest have been gathered into it, and, given an intelligent landlord, can be drawn out of it.

The intelligent landlord is not, perhaps, so common as he was. When an inn has been taken over by a brewery company, its legends seem to take fright on the appearance of the newcomer's hireling, and to elude the inventory. The tale of that town or village refuses to record itself to the sterile ears of a board of directors. We know that every old inn, by its mere existence, must have a rich story, but with those that have been acquired by breweries, we have to fill in the details for ourselves, and where we look, justifiably, for a stout volume of records, we find but a meagre pamphlet. But the story is there, and where the landlord cannot supply it, its walls will themselves supply it.

Happily, there are still plenty of landlords who *can* supply it. There are still numbers of inns in private possession, and many that have been held by the same name for six or seven generations, and whose customers of to-day bear the same name as the customers who were served by the present landlord's great-great-great etc. It is in places like these that you will find whatever you may seek of information on the story of that place. You may go to the local parson, and the local squire, and the local magistrate, and draw blank at each. But at the inn you will get what you want, for it is Green's Short History of its district, and what the landlord or the assembled villagers don't know at first hand, they

can remember from what their great-great-grandfathers told them. They can tell you there why Tipsy Lane is called Tipsy Lane. They can tell you how Roundabout Hill got its name, the year of Trafalgar, from Billy Buncle driving his mother-in-law eight times round it in pretended search of his own cottage. They can tell you how the big estate is called Cottonlands because a lad their great-greats knew was transported to Virginia for stealing a lamb, and came back to his native fields virtuous and rich; and they know why their present Member of Parliament won't be re-elected, and who will be. When the emigrant returns on a visit to his home-town, the second thing he does, after greeting his relatives, is to go to the inn. He does not go from cottage to cottage to seek the survivors of his youth; he goes to the centre of life, knowing that in the inn he will see, or hear news of, all the men who were boys when he was a boy.

Americans and men of the Dominions are always puzzled by the Englishman's attachment to tradition, for tradition to them is a baseless superstition. To those who have never seen England the facts of our story mean less than the tables of statistics in the *World Almanac*. It all happened so far away; its appointments and properties are beyond visualisation. They read of the Wars of the Roses, of the beheading of Raleigh, of the signing of Magna Charta, of the trial and death of Charles I., as we read of ancient civilisations before the Flood. But we are attached to tradition, not as to a legend, but as to a part of our daily lives. It is not merely something our fathers have told us, but something that we see and live with; and when they come to England, they understand. The whole story is warmed and lit with life. For there, in the Record Office, is the very Domesday Book. There is the balcony from which Charles took his last look upon London. There are

the actual cottages seen by the warriors of the Wars of the Roses. There is the cell where Raleigh languished, the walls he touched. There is the island where John bowed to the barons. There is the room where the sightless Milton sat; the steps where Becket parleyed with the knights; and there is the glove of Queen Elizabeth and the armour of the Black Prince. England presents itself to them like an English home—strewn with portraits and mementoes of the family. The actors have passed, but the setting of their comedy remains, and the properties they played with; and through these things we are in direct blood-contact with our earlier selves.

It is this *visible* continuity that at once awakens the intelligent American to sympathetic admiration of our country. One of the most loving books ever written upon England was the work of a typical intelligent American, William Winter, and one of his sharpest impressions was the realisation of the vitality and spiritual power of our tradition, which so many strangers, and some of our own folk, mistake for sentimental attachment to dead things. There are bright and hard young spirits of to-day who are anxious to abolish tradition. They see it merely as something that holds us back. But if that were to be done I think even those who most earnestly desire it would soon be feeling a little chill and lonely. They would find themselves wandering in a fog. Tradition is not a fetter: it is an inspiration. It is guide, counsellor, and friend. To abolish national tradition would be like abolishing personal memory. Without memory the human creature could make no material, mental, or spiritual progress, nor, without tradition, could a nation. When a man's memory ceases to work he ceases to develop. When he cannot remember the past, atrophy sets in, as it sets in when he can *only* remember the past. Either extreme is dangerous. Fifty years ago

the East was on the point of death because it was the slave of tradition; to-day a great country is floundering about because it has lost its tradition. England, happily, has never been near either danger. Tradition, which is simply memory of trial and error, has kept her in the middle way.

William Winter saw this. In that loving book, *Shakespeare's England*, which covers much more than its title implies, he says:

> One of the strongest instincts of the English character is the instinct of permanence. It acts involuntarily, it pervades the national life, and, as Pope said of the universal soul, it operates unspent. Institutions seem to have grown out of human nature in this country, and are as much its expression as blossoms, leaves, and flowers are the expression of inevitable law. The brilliant career, the memorable achievement, once fulfilled, takes a permanent shape in some kind of outward and visible memorial, some absolute and palpable fact, which thenceforth is an accepted part of the history of the land and the experience of the people.

He found among us not only the sense of the past in full pulse, but the very furniture of it. It is all one story, set in one long moment of time; relatively no more past than last Thursday; and this oneness of story is nowhere realised more sharply than in the inn. As we sit in the ingle-nook of the *Blue Boar* or the *Plume of Feathers* we are sitting, as Mr. Baldwin suggests, where the bowmen of Agincourt or the pikemen of Naseby sat, and among much the same kindly company. The men from Mons and Ypres sit now in the very embrasure where the men of Worcester sat, and the sailors from Jutland drink their beer upon the very stones where

the brown men of Drake drank their sack. In the thirteenth-century *Angel*, at Grantham, you may engage the room where Richard III. sat to sign the death-warrant of Buckingham. At the *Saracen's Head*, at Southwell, you may sleep in the room where Charles I. slept before surrendering to the Scots. At the fourteenth-century *George*, at Norton St. Philip, you may have that room at whose window Monmouth, while watching an engagement of his men, narrowly escaped honourable death by bullet. At the *King's Head* at Aylesbury you may sit beneath a perfect specimen of a fifteenth-century window, where the farmers and drovers of 1460 sat, while, like ourselves, they discussed the price of things, and their horses, and their children, and rumours of the Great War of White Rose and Red Rose. At the *George*, at Portsmouth, you may have the room in which Nelson slept his last night on land before boarding the *Victory* for Trafalgar. Indeed, whether the records of its story exist or not, you can visit scarcely any inn without coming at some point upon the little concrete fact that links and illuminates three or four centuries.

Don't be afraid that I am going to talk of the "romance" of the inn: I have suffered too much from that kind of talk myself. To certain good souls these touches of the ever-presence of our history prove somewhat overwhelming. They cannot look at an old inn or palace without suffering a corruption of the time-sense. Their talk becomes agitated with Old-World, Quaint, Merrie England, The Good Old Days, and The Olden Times. Any building that was built four hundred years ago is to them Old World: they seem not to have heard of Chaldea or Cathay. Any clothes that people wore three hundred years ago are Quaint. Any dance earlier than the waltz they locate with a mythical Merrie England. Any story that happened

three hundred years ago is Romantic. I don't understand this. I have heard a specimen of these people speak of the murder of Mr. Thompson, at Ilford, as a sordid story; and half an hour later speak of the murder of Mr. Arden, at Faversham, as a romantic story. This same specimen sees a Corner House as vulgar, and an old carrier's house as romantic. I am out of my depth with them. I do not cherish the inn because it gives me the feeling of the past; the life of the present is, and always was, much more stimulating and satisfying. My interest in the old inn is that it helps me to bring whatever of the past was beautiful or stirring or sorrowful into the currency of the present. I find the beheading of Lady Jane Grey as real and matter-of-fact as the shooting of Nurse Cavell; the fugitive journey of Queen Margaret as real and matter-of-fact as the fugitive journey of Violet Charlesworth; the capture of Monmouth after Sedgemoor as real and matter-of-fact as the capture of Sir Roger Casement in the Irish hills; the flight of James II. by boat as present an affair as the flight of a swindling financier by air; the arrest of Browne and Kennedy in their Battersea garage as "romantic" as the arrest of Guido Fawkes in the Parliament House.

But people will continue to talk of the near-past as romantic, and the present as commonplace, though what precisely they mean by "romance" they never can explain. Actually, I think, they mean nothing more than "different," though I cannot perceive any essential difference between the Plantagenet people and ourselves. Their reactions were the same as ours, and their thought-processes operated on the same planes as ours; and in this matter they are much nearer to us than the Burmese of the twentieth century, who very definitely are "different." If the word "romance" had ever any meaning, it stood for the perception of wonder, and

in this sense a street of suburban villas is as romantic to a Pitcairn Islander as his beaches are to us. Seeing that every suburban villa is a part of life, the setting for hopes and fears, hate and love and lust, for the agony of birth and the agony of death, I don't know where you could look for anything more stirring to the imagination and the heart. But your "romantic" spirits won't have it; romance for them belongs only to the dead.

I admit that certain matters of the past do touch the spirit of wonder, but that is not because they were done by people long dead, but because they had the essence of wonder in them. That essence is timeless. Stout Cortes, looking seaward from a peak in Darien, can have known no finer thrill than that known by the man who first realised, from a crude experiment, that he could send a symphony through the air from one given point to another given point. Christopher Wren, planning the rebuilding of London after the fire, knew no more of the sense of power than the man who dared the business of driving a railway under the crust of London; and the people who went by coach from London to York in three days were precisely as romantic as are those who fly from Croydon to Le Bourget in two hours.

And so with our inns. They are current facts. Delightful and loaded with interest as they are, they are no more and no less romantic than the great hotels of the Embankment, as you will know a hundred years hence, when the inside history of those places comes to be written. But these pseudo-romantics won't believe it. I know many of this type who deliberately choose to stay at a dilapidated and badly-conducted inn, because it is old, when the town has a comfortable and bright hotel. I am not one of them. When the old country inn is good—and there are many more good ones than bad

ones—I am for the inn. But I am living in the twentieth century, and when I travel I want all the hygienic conveniences and all the tasteful comforts of that century. I am not to be blinded to a lack of these by a parade of those quaintnesses, kept for the romantics, by which many inns scamp their true business. Quaintness is too often a bare-faced excuse for dark, dirt, and casual service—too high a price to pay for contemporary panelling and ingle-nook fireplaces. We all know those places. Dickens knew them, and had a good deal to say about them—those "old-established *Bull's Heads*, with their old-established table-cloths and cruets, and their old-established veal cutlets, and their old established bed-linen." Such inns I visit for whatever of story they may have; for residence I choose the up-to-date hotel.

But when the old inn combines architectural beauty, historic association, modern fixtures, beautiful appointments, and a cook who has read some later culinary author than Mrs. Glasse, then I prefer it to the hotel. The hotel is a modern necessity, and it serves its purpose marvellously well. Johnson's panegyric of the good inn could justly be extended to the good modern hotel—nothing more serviceable to the needs of to-day has been contrived by modern man. But I prefer to lodge in a house whose rooms and passages bear some relation to the rooms and passages of the house I live in, rather than in a film-world mansion with drawing-rooms a quarter-mile square and passages as endless as the passages at Camden Town Tube Station. I agree with the landlord of a tavern at Arundel, who was talking to me of the Castle and its Family. "Well, far as I'm concerned, they can have it. I know this much—if I had a tenth of their money, I'd buy meself a *home*." And so, all things being equal between the hotel and the inn, I choose the inn, but purely for its intimate comfort.

Stevenson was one of those who helped the cultivation of this "romantic" stuff about inns. You remember his passage on the inn at Burford Bridge, under Box Hill; or perhaps you don't?

> The inn at Burford Bridge, with its arbours and green garden, and silent eddying river—though it is known already as the place where Keats wrote some of his *Endymion* and Nelson parted from his Emma—still seems to wait the coming of the appropriate legend. Within these ivied walls, behind these old green shutters, some further business smoulders, waiting for its hour. The old *Hawes Inn* at the Queen's Ferry makes a similar call upon my fancy. . . . I have lived both at the Hawes and Burford in a perpetual flutter, on the heels, as it seemed, of some adventure that should justify the place; but though the feeling had me to bed at night and called me again at morning in one unbroken round of pleasure and suspense, nothing befell me in either worth remark. The man or the hour had not yet come; but some day, I think, a boat shall put off from the Queen's Ferry, fraught with a dear cargo, and some frosty night a horseman, on a tragic errand, rattle with his whip upon the green shutters of the inn at Burford.

Here is the very Wardour Street stuff that in others he sneered at. Legend and adventure! It is not enough for him that Keats wrote the greater part of *Endymion* while staying there; that Nelson took his last embrace of Lady Hamilton within its rooms; that it was then serving the daily occasions, agreeable or desperate, of hundreds of human creatures. He wants Adventure, and he can only think of a frosty night and a horseman on a G. P. R. James errand. An extreme Communist, driving up to its doors in his second-hand Ford, on the

tragic errand of warning a colleague of an impending raid on the premises in King Street, I suppose wouldn't do. Must be a horseman, rattling shutters with his whip; "Something to do with history," as a dull man I met explained the Hampden Monument at Chalgrove; though where adventure connects with one and misses another, only those bemused with Wardour Street can say. Life at any one period is no more romantic than life at any other period. Wonder is everywhere about us. Events are perpetual; and when I sit down to dinner in a fifteenth-century inn I am aware of no sense of the "romance" that these pople mean; only of a satisfying sense of the immediacy of events, in that I am doing something that Richard III., Samuel Pepys, Daniel Defoe, Jonathan Swift, David Garrick, William Hogarth, Sir Walter Scott and Charles Dickens did in that very inn the other day.

Nobody using our inns three centuries ago found them romantic, and if they were not romantic then, they cannot be now. Their architecture was as common to those eyes as the architecture of London gin-palaces is to ours, and sleeping in a carven four-poster was as common then as sleeping on a Vi-spring mattress now. Nobody who travelled by horse or coach thought he was doing anything romantic, and he wasn't: he was using the best-known means of travelling, and he only put up for the night at an inn, not because he had any pleasure in inns, but because he had not reached his destination. That is why the old inn is so delightful in its atmosphere—not because it was cherished and consciously endued with interest in its time, but because it was a commonplace of everyday life, and developed to the natural needs and moods of man.

At whatever point it stands—whether in the main street, at a cross-roads, under a hill, or opposite the church—it has a definite air of "belonging." Like our

churches and cottages and village-greens, it appears not to have been made, but to have grown out of the soil like flowers. Indeed, that is what it has done. You have only to look at an old inn to be able to give, roughly, the date of its beginnings, and to be able to name the district you are in. They follow the architectural style of their birthday, and they employ the material of their locality—stone, brick, wood, thatch—whatever the locality affords. By thus following nature they cannot help harmonising with their backgrounds. Grey stone fits the Cotswold landscape; thatch fits Warwickshire; brick is right for East Anglia; and granite for the Lakes. It is only when materials have been imported that we receive a jarring effect, and we receive this as much from some great country houses as from standardised bungalows. Some of the big brewery companies are great offenders in this matter; and in an old village their modern attempts at black-and-white plaster work—*Ye Olde Thisse and Thatte*—though kinder in intention than the façade of the Universal Stores, still makes that defiant glare by which the guilty conscience of fake gives it away.

By a tour from inn to inn you may make a connected study of domestic architecture from the fourteenth century to the twentieth. A very pleasant tour, too, if it be June and the car is running sweetly. By following the list given at the beginning of the next chapter, you will find not only some beautiful specimens of period work but also some delightful tracts of country that may be new to you. And you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are doing something sensible: studying fact and not romance.

If people must at any cost dig their pseudo-romance out of old inns, they have a much better hunting-field in an intangible part of them—I mean their names. There, indeed, is scope for the sense of wonder, and

there our inns are, perhaps, most expressively English. When one looks through a directory of English inns one feels that it is not a directory of material buildings at all. It is as though Puck and Peaseblossom once played an insane game across the map of England—a sort of treasure-hunt—in which these signs were occult clues. But the Englishman's humour, to the puzzle of all foreigners, is much given to this grave-faced sky-larking. He delights in private jokes to which nobody but himself has the key, and in giving a fantastic edge of poetry to nonsense; and in naming his inns he has given full rein to this bent. Don't believe all the explanations you read of these lunatic signs. Those explanations are manufactured: our inn signs were not. They were spontaneous, and they mean precisely what they say—or don't say.

They are the Englishman's claim to his lost place in the world of faery. The learned Smelfungus is never happy with a poet's fancy until he has reduced it to the lowest common denominator of a Blue Book; and having demolished our folk-tales and nursery rhymes into the dust of political pamphlets and electioneering squibs, he has got busy on our inn signs. He will tell you that such a sign as the *Pig and Whistle* is a corruption of the Anglo-Saxon "Pige Washael," and that the *Bull and Mouth* must be a corruption of the "Boulogne Mouth," celebrating a victory of Henry VIII. Corruption my knee-cap! The fellow is so incapable of understanding fancy that to him everything fanciful *must* be an over-dressed fact. He can't see that to call a house the *Pig and Whistle* is just what an Englishman, left to himself, would do. Why? Oh, just because he is expecting you to ask why. And if you press the question, his explanation will doubtless be: "Because the higher the fewer." The first innkeeper who named his house the *Pig and Whistle* doubtless did so, either

because the combination tickled his nerve of idiocy, or because he saw that it would bring questioning customers like Smelfungus and Co. And those others who named their houses the *Bag o' Nails* and the *Goat and Compasses*, did so, we may be sure, without any dark postulation of Bacchus or of the encompassing God; they indulged their English whimsy as suburban householders indulge theirs by naming their villas Jernizend or Kozicott or Yworry, and as owners of punts indulge theirs in names like Lazigel, Dufallin, and Nortiboy. Smelfungus always was unaware of that human failing, facetiousness; wherever it appears it keeps him up at nights searching for dark motive. He hasn't yet started work on *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*, or the verse of Edward Lear, but fifty years hence I'll be bound he will be finding political significance—something about Disraeli and Gladstone and Parnell—in the Lobster and the Whiting, the Walrus and the Carpenter, and the Mad Hatter; and runcible hats will no doubt be elucidated as the badge of some anti-royalist league. But there are no political events that are monstrous and scarlet enough to supply the basis of the names of some of our inns. They come from the land of burning spears and horses of air. Our ancient landlords were truly hosts of furious fancies (one of them must have been conscious of this: at Redbourn there is a *Mad Tom*); and the more we go inning the farther we penetrate into that glorious mad world which Dickens knew better than any of us. They —Smelfungus and his hirelings—have killed our fairy tales, but what a world of goblinesquerie is still left to us in our inns. Here are a few characters and appointments for a pantomime which each of you can write for himself:—

The Rent Day; The Struggler; The Man in the Moon; Our Mutual Friend; The Civil Usage; The Foaming Jug;

You Might As Well; No Hurry; The Merry Month of May; The Trip to Jerusalem; The Sea Horse; The Ship and Turtle; The Barge Aground; The Black Boy and Stomach-Ache; The Great Turk; The Ram Jam; The Indian Queen; The Marvel of Marvels; The Bell and Mackerel; The Razor and Hen; The Flatiron and Frog; The Goose and Gridiron; The Magpie and Punchbowl; the Cat and Bagpipes; the Scissors and Pin; The Bear and Rummer; The Rover's Return; Uncle Tom's Cabin; The Quiet Woman; The Flaming Log; the Tabby Cat; the Book in Hand; The Tippling Philosopher; The Mortal Man.

But no; you couldn't write it, nor could I. Even a collaboration of Lewis Carroll, Edward Lear, Thomas Love Peacock, G. K. Chesterton, Sir James Barrie, Harry Graham and Father Ronald Knox could not do justice to that fantasia of up-the-sleeve imbecility. The spirit that inspired those signs appeals to all of us, particularly to poets; and one of the best celebrations of them that I know is to be found in a work of a modern poet, the Rev. John Gray, who, in his poem, *The Long Road*, has made a constellation of those signs that scintillates as brightly as the names of the handmaidens of the Blessed Damozel. I quote a few stanzas:

Even, wealthy reader, you
Are fortunate to know a score
The kingdom's length, from shore to shore
Deserving praise; a little more
Perhaps three or two.

And here some are named
Both where you have, and haven't stayed,
Or where you wouldn't have delayed
For fifty times the bill you paid.
For you were jolly well afraid;
And still feel ashamed.

The Maid's Head; the Forge;
The Radegonde; the Gallows Inn;
The Salutation; Harlequin;
The Cat Hole Keld; the Trout; the Queen;
The Bladebone; the George.

The Magpie; the Chough;
The Red, the Dun, the Dapple Cow;
The Fish; the Boot and Shoe; the Plough;
The Just in Time; the Barley Mow;
The Woodcock; the Dove;

The Plum Pudding; Wheel;
The Merry Mouth; the Duck; the Fleece;
The Apple, Oak, and Cocoa Trees;
The Hatchet Inn; the Compasses;
And Bells by Rings, and Eights, and Threes,
The Bluebell, the Bell;

And so on and so;
But in the empire of the blest,
Where inns are old and gala-dressed,
Their signs are not among the least
Of good things to know.

It is pleasant to imagine the salted characters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—fathers of those who labelled the Flanders trenches "Piccadilly," "Park Lane" and "Old Kent Road"—pottering outside their houses of gable and thatch, like undergraduates with their first Baby Austin, debating such fancies as the *Old House at Home*, *The Shovel and Boot*, the *Hole in the Wall*, *Bel and the Dragon*, the *Why Not?* the *Nutmeg Grater;* and weighing their merit of oddity and appeal. It must have been at noon of a high-keyed summer day that some landlord, standing at the door

of his newly-opened house, was caught up into the golden vibrance of life and moved to write his homage to it by inscribing his house, the *Sun in Splendour;* and if we could trace the genesis of other signs we should doubtless find that each arose from the landlord's catching at some fleeting moment of fun or pleasure or memory. They are typical of us, these landlords, as they were typical of their time; so English.

And here I would like to offer thanks to the editors of this series for reviving those almost lost words "England" and "English." Of late all the more gracious and lustrous qualities of our homeland—what we mean by "English"—have been lumped into the words "Britain" and "British," and buried there. These are cold gritty words, belonging to empires and politics and trade, and the like squalid things. I can see a man willingly laying down his life for English ideas, or Irish ideas, or Scotch ideas, or Welsh ideas; I cannot so readily see him doing it for British ideas. It seems like dying for a trade-mark or a coal-scuttle. England means Shakespeare and Herrick and Purcell; Constable and Crome; Fielding and Dickens and Borrow; Oxford and Cambridge; the Thames, the Severn, the Trent, and the Avon. You have only to speak the words "English" and "British" to perceive in the one the soft curves of our southern hills, and in the other the coarse timbre of the advertising-agent. Say "British poetry," "British cricket" and "the British inn," and, if you have any spiritual ear at all, you will get the feeling that you get on putting your right foot into a left shoe, or looking at Chesterfield's spire. The words make illicit intercourse. It is like an association of statistics and nightingales, workhouses and magic casements.

This touches little upon our subject, but in pondering upon the inn I fear I have caught the inn mood. The inn connotes relaxation, casual talk in fits and starts,

and that is the method I am inclined to adopt for this sketch, and have indeed adopted. Perhaps for its subject it is the fitting method. It is correct to be orderly and serious on the efficacy of works, or the Boat Race, or industrial welfare, or a misreading in a poem of Nicolas Breton; but in this case the law of harmony with theme becomes a licence rather than a law.

The origin of the inn-sign lies, of course, in the illiteracy of the people. It was useless for a trader to have his name and business inscribed upon his premises in days when so few people could read them. So the barber-surgeon put out a multi-coloured pole, representing a limb swathed in bandages; the banker put out the three golden balls of Lombardy; the grocer put out a dummy sugar-loaf; the mercer put out a stockinged leg; the goldsmith put out a golden arm holding a gold-beater's mallet; the armourer a knife; the tobacconist a dummy roll of raw tobacco; and so on. The oldest of all inn-signs is that of the *Bush*, since the bush—a clump of ivy and vine-leaves, symbolical of Bacchus—was the sign by which the very earliest alehouses were distinguished from adjoining cottages. This sign was the basis of a proverb that much puzzled my childish mind. The house that sold good ale was in little need of this sign; if Mother Rummyng kept good ale her house would become known without any help from the projecting bush; hence "Good wine needs no bush," which used to be found in all copy-books. But as "bush" conveyed nothing to me but a hiding-place, I found the statement meaningless. It seemed to me that if a man wanted to hide any wine at all, he would hide his good wine and push forward his bad. I was equally puzzled by the statement that wine-houses sold "wine from the wood," and could not understand why grapes grown in a forest should be better than grapes grown on a hill-side.

After the *Bush* came those signs that were simply the crests of the great lords—the *Talbot*, the *Eagle and Child*—and later those . . . *Arms*, implying the heraldic shield of the family upon whose territory the inn stood. These signs are neither fanciful nor comic, and here Smelfungus is on firm ground; they really are based on matters of fact. Most of them explain themselves. The *Lions*, *Bulls*, *Feathers*, *Greyhounds*, *Boars*, *White Harts* refer to the crests of respective sovereigns; the *Saracen's Heads* and *Crescents* to the Crusades; the *Roses* and *Rose and Crowns* to 1471; the *Royal Oaks* to Charles; and the *George and Dragons* to our obscure patron saint. The *Lamb and Flag* comes from the Middle Temple; the *Flying Horse* from the Inner Temple; the *White Horse* from the Hanovers. Others are identified with various trades and callings, or taken from the arms of City Companies, as the *Green Man* (for forest rangers), the *Waggon and Horses* (for carriers), the *Pick and Shovel* (for navvies), the *Ring o' Bells* and the *London Apprentice;* the *Cupid and Torch* (Glaziers' Company), the *Wheatsheaf* (Bakers' Company), the *Elephant and Castle* (Cutlers' Company), the *Three Compasses* (Carpenters' Company), the *Dolphin* (Watermen's Company). Others celebrate national heroes and victories—the *Lord Nelson*, the *Blenheim*, the *Alma*, the *British Grenadier*, the *Field of Waterloo*, the *Hero of Lucknow*, the *Lord Clive*, and (at Effingham) the *Douglas Haig;* and there are two that celebrate literary heroes, or maybe celebrate them only as patrons of a sport—the *Charles Cotton* in Derbyshire, and the *Izaak Walton* in Staffordshire. *Compleat Anglers* are to be found wherever there is a river. The happiest of all signs, I think, a supreme example of fitness for purpose, is one that in three words combines a pun, a statement of fact, and an implied invitation. The landlord who, delving into the greenwood of his fancy for a sign, was given

this, deserves to be the saint of English inn-keeping. It is *The Open Arms*.

Perhaps it was this excellent fellow who originated the delightful custom of giving names to rooms instead of cold numbers. It is a custom that should have become general, since it gives the guest a pleasing sense of possession, and allows the host still further outlet for his individuality. A few inns still observe it. Sometimes the rooms are flowers; sometimes they are virtues; sometimes they are English kings; at the *Shakespeare Hotel*, at Stratford, the rooms bear the titles of Shakespeare's plays. Those are inns we remember. How pleasant to go up to bed to the *Merrie Wives*. How pleasant to have the boy enter the lounge with "Telegram for Love-in-a-mist!" "Parcel for William and Mary!" or to call for "Chivalry!" instead of "Number Twen-tee-two!" Pleasant, too, to hear the waiter pass your wine-order: "Bottle-eighty-four-slightly-chilled-fer Midsummer Night's Dream!"

Although we use inns at all seasons, it is strange how seldom we think of midsummer nights when thinking of the inn. The idea of it is associated almost wholly in our minds with winter. Perhaps, after all, this is not so strange, for the first office of the inn is shelter, and in summer our minds are not set upon shelter. As between the inn and the road, our choice, during hours of light, is the road. But in winter the inn allures us. It is not merely shelter and refreshment: it is a beatific image of contrast by which the least inviting inn becomes desirable. Outside are snow, ice, fog, or rain, wind and mire. Inside—your imagination says—are glowing hearths, piquant odours, lights, drawn curtains, peace and order, and soothing chairs. It is grace after rancour. Of all the descriptions of inns and inn-scenes that I can recall, both of the actual and the fiction worlds, almost all are set in winter. Indeed, most of

our inns appear to have been designed with an eye only to hard weather, their narrow passages, low ceilings, small rooms, huge fire-places, and shuttered windows, all making for snugness. Their very furniture is winter furniture. It is a minor expression of their essential Englishness—pessimism about the weather. The result is that on a blazing day of July or August—and we really have a lot of such days—most of our fine old inns are unbearable. Without deliberate search, I can recall but one summer-picture of an inn. Here it is, from Dickens:

> How beautiful the landscape kindling in the light, and that luxuriant influence passing on like a celestial presence, brightening everything. . . . Cornfields, hedge-rows, fences, homesteads, and clustered roofs, the steeple of the church, the stream, the water-mill, all sprang out of the gloomy darkness smiling. At such a time, one little roadside inn, snugly sheltered behind a great elm-tree with a rare seat for idlers encircling its capacious bole, addressed a cheerful front towards the traveller, as a house of entertainment ought, and tempted him with many mute but significant assurances of a comfortable welcome. The ruddy sign-board perched up in the tree, with its golden letters winking in the sun, ogled the passer-by, from among the green leaves, like a jolly face, and promised good cheer. The horse-trough, full of clear fresh water, and the ground below it sprinkled with droppings of fragrant hay, made every horse that passed prick up its ears. The crimson curtains in the lower rooms, and the pure white hangings in the little bed-chambers above, beckoned "Come in!" with every breath of air. Upon the bright green shutters there were golden legends about beer and ale, and neat wines, and good beds; and an affecting

picture of a brown jug frothing over at the top. Upon the window-sills were flowering plants in bright red pots, which made a lively show against the white front of the house; and in the darkness of the doorway there were streaks of light which glanced off from the surface of bottles and tankards.

And here is a companion-piece, its winter twin of felicitous description:

Cheerily, though there were none abroad to see it, shone the Maypole light that evening. Blessings on the red—deep, ruby, glowing red—old curtain of the window; blending into one rich stream of brightness, fire and candle, meat, drink, and company, and gleaming like a jovial eye upon the bleak waste out of doors. Within, what carpet like its crunching sand, what music merry as its crackling logs, what perfume like its kitchen's dainty breath, what weather genial as its hearty warmth! Blessings on the old house, how sturdily it stood! How did the vexed wind chafe and roar about its stalwart roof; how did it pant and strive with its wide chimneys, which still poured forth from their hospitable throats great clouds of smoke, and puffed defiance in its face; how, above all, did it drive and rattle at the casement, emulous to extinguish that cheerful glow, which would not be put down and seemed the brighter for the conflict. The profusion, too, the rich and lavish bounty, of that goodly tavern! It was not enough that one fire roared and sparkled on its spacious hearth; in the tiles which paved and compassed it, five hundred flickering fires burnt brightly also. It was not enough that one red curtain shut the wild night out, and shed its cheerful influence on the room. In every saucepan-lid, and candlestick, and vessel of

copper, brass, or tin that hung upon the walls, were countless ruddy hangings, flashing and gleaming with every motion of the blaze, and offering, let the eye wander where it might, interminable vistas of the same rich colour. The old oak wainscoating, the beams, the chairs, the seats, reflected it in a deep dull glimmer. There were fires and red curtains in the very eyes of the drinkers, in their buttons, in their liquor, in the pipes they smoked.

The novels of the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries are studded with similar winter pictures of inns, as the roads with mile-stones. "All good novels," said Augustine Birrell, "are full of inns"—and he might have said a lot of bad novels, too. The inn appears in the novels of this period almost as constantly as the home. What would *Tom Jones* and *Joseph Andrews* and *Roderick Random* and *Pickwick* and *Lavengro* be without their inns? Much of their gusto would be gone; and without the inn the whole binding essence would be gone from that *Pickwick* of to-day, *The Flying Inn*—a book that should be in every self-respecting guest-bedroom, along with *Biffin*, *The Wallet of Kai Lung*, *A Cruise Upon Wheels*, *Trivia*, *Voces Populi*, and the other half-dozen. From *Moll Flanders* onwards to the mid-nineteenth-century there is scarcely any novel that does not use the inn for dramatic meeting, parting, curious encounter, or comic interlude. It is only necessary for the novelist to set two strangers talking in an inn, and straightway the whole material of a novel unrols itself. It affords a starting-point that may lead to the ends of the world and back again. The inn on land and the ship on the sea form a nucleus of all human adventure.

Roderick Random may be an indifferent novel, by comparison with *Tom Jones*, but it is none the less an

achievement: it does give us a vast sweep of human nature, social life, and geography. The book itself is like Strap's and Roderick's journey to London—we see it as a great tumultuous road starred with the lights of inns. None of the inns is identified with known houses, yet they are as real as any of the inns we have slept in. In their perception and realisation of the swarming microcosm of the inn, Smollett and Dickens are an unmatched pair.

George Eliot knew the inn, and presented it with truth. The inn scene in *Silas Marner*, for example, could not have been done by man or woman unfamiliar with the inward inspiration of inns. She liked inns. She liked to sit in them and listen to the gossip, and she did, and by some mixture of masculine ease and feminine dignity, was accepted by the company in days when a woman in a bar-parlour was an outrage on the company and on womanhood.

From Chaucer, through Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Heywood, Farquhar, Goldsmith, Scott, Kingsley, down to to-day, the inn is a recurrent motive in our literature. The reason is obvious: the inn is the finest focal point for observation of men and manners. A few days in one inn will afford a diverse study of people that we could only otherwise gain by visits to a hundred different houses; and those writers who shun the inn and the tavern reveal in their work their limited knowledge of human types and their ignorance of how men really think and talk and behave in the moments when they are truly themselves. It is everybody's place, a place, too, where men are more relaxed than they are in their own homes. The man of ten-thousand a year dines at the next table to the holidaying clerk of two-hundred a year, both of them within ear-shot of the tap-room labourers of twenty-five shillings a week; and in the bar the nobleman ceases

to be a nobleman and the peasant ceases to be a peasant. Both become men. Only in the inn can this happen. It was one of our first social institutions, and it has outlasted many that appeared to be of greater value. The volume of its commendation, which will be found in my *Book of the Inn*, began with our first scribes, and we are still increasing it. Englishmen have lost respect for their Parliament, their Church, and their Press; they still respect their inns, for they are as much a part of us as they were of our fathers. At their worst they are something that we are grateful for, and would not be without. When they are good, they afford all the comforts of our homes, with the added luxury, as Jonson noted, that we have far more service and attention at our command than we have in our homes—at least, those of us who don't live in palaces.

And of all inns there is none so good as the English inn—when it *is* good. Foreigners and travellers have said so, and are still saying so. An ambassador from Germany, who stayed at the *Fountain*, in Canterbury, in the twelfth century, 1129, left on record his appreciation of it, and incidentally founded that institution, The Visitors' Book:

> The inns in England are the best in Europe, those of Canterbury are the best in England, and the *Fountain*, wherein I am now lodged as handsomely as I were in the King's Palace, the best in Canterbury.

A little fulsome, perhaps; but then he was an ambassador. Fynes Moryson, who had travelled Europe, and was moreover a Scot, is perhaps a better referee:

> The world affords not such inns as England hath, either for good or cheap entertainment after the guests' own pleasure, or for humble attendance on

> passengers, yea, even in very poor villages, where, if Curculio of Plautus should see the thatched houses, he would fall into a fainting of his spirits, but if he should smell the variety of meats, his starveling look would be much cheered.

And the English inn is still worthy of that praise. The tale of hospitality and generous meals, songs and stories and disputes, and comfortable beds, is unfinished. It goes on as we go on, meeting our needs and moods as it always did. The fires that were lighted three hundred years ago are not yet out. To-night, Boots is making them up as he was always making them up. To-night the kitchen is dressing the joint, as it used to dress the umble pie, and is effusing still its teasing premonition of feast. The cloth is being laid; the beds are being warmed; shovel-board, under another name, is still being played in the bar, and old jests exchanged, as though the company had been there all through the inn's life. With occasional changes of clothes, it seems to have been one long Evening. And at three o'clock in the morning Boots—whose name may be Herbert, but who is known as John, because the Boots of that inn has for centuries been John—Boots will pull upon those three-hundred-year doors to admit the straight-eight, with those movements and that gruff acknowledgment proper to the small hours which an earlier John used in admitting the waggon and the post-chaise. To the inn time is static. In one breath it has seen all English History, and we of to-day are only late arrivals among its guests.

CHAPTER II

THE OLDEST INHABITANT

SO old an institution is the inn that although half a dozen existing inns make individual claim to being the oldest in England, each of these began so far back that none of them can produce the records that would prove its claim. The *Fighting Cocks*, at St. Alban's, can show, if not prove, a life of a thousand years—but not wholly as an inn. The *Fountain*, at Canterbury, which can produce the testimonial just quoted, seems a more serious claimant, and this, and the *Angel*, at Blyth, which can show a bill dated 1274, easily displace the claim of the *Seven Stars*, at Manchester, to be the oldest licensed house in England. To me it is a matter of no importance: they can fight it out among themselves in the company of the claimants to the largest market-place, the ugliest Town Hall, the shortest street, and the tallest hollyhock. It is enough for me that I can enjoy these places, and, through them, touch the earth that produced the flower of the *Canterbury Tales* and the *Vision of Piers Plowman*. Here are some of the oldest, with their respective dates. Of course, only one or two of these stand as they were built, but all of them have at least portions of the original:

The Fighting Cocks, St. Alban's	795
The Fountain, Canterbury	1029
The Bell, Finedon	1042
The Ostrich, Colnbrook	1106
The Angel, Grantham	1213

The Angel, Blyth	1270
The George and Dragon, Speldhurst	1270
The Maid's Head, Norwich	1287
The Green Man, Erdington	1306
The George, Salisbury	1320
The Saracen's Head, Newark	1341
The Seven Stars, Manchester	1356
The Crown, Chiddingfold	1383
The Crown, Norton St. Philip	1397
The New Inn, Gloucester	1430
The Spread Eagle, Midhurst	1430
The King's Head, Aylesbury	1445
The Red Lion, Colchester	1470
The George, Glastonbury	1475
The Lion, Buckden	1477
The George, Southwark	1554
The Bull, Long Melford	1580
The George, Winchcombe	1583

But even these do not show us the beginnings of the inn. As an institution it dates much earlier. It began, as I have said, with the roads, and the first inns were undoubtedly Roman. These were of three sorts—*diversoria*, *bibula*, and *tabernæ*—catering for the different occasions of the resident and the wayfarer; and in various unearthments of Roman remains, traces of these have been found. One of the most common inn signs—the *Chequers*—points this Roman origin. Chess was a popular game in Rome, and those *tabernæ* where it could be played announced the fact by a chequer-board, real or painted, on their walls. Doubtless this was done in the Roman inns of England, and the practice carried through the Saxon inns to our own time. No traces of the Saxon ale-houses, which were probably of wood or wattle, have been found, but it is certain that they were a feature of English life by the

year 600; and there exist decrees of Ethelbert (616) and Ina, King of Wessex (730) for their better ordering.

The development from ale-house to inn was a natural step, but some centuries passed before it was made. Throughout the early days of travel, the only shelter to be had was that afforded by hospitable lords or religious houses. When the king or other great personage travelled, he commanded hospitality from the nearest castle, and his retinue was billeted, without by-your-leave, upon the best houses of the town or village. A kind of advance booking-agent would arrive in the town during the day, and would mark with chalk such houses as he thought fit for the reception of the higher ranks of the king's followers. At nightfall these men would establish themselves and their own servants in that house, and use it and its provisions as their own. For lesser people there were the abbeys and other religious establishments, such as those of the Knights Templar, with whom hospitality was a sacred charge. Here shelter and entertainment could be had for two days at a time at no cost beyond voluntary offerings by those who had anything to offer. Important travellers were entertained within the Abbey itself: the "mere" people were accommodated at hostels and hospices built for that purpose at the gates. Some of these hostels may be seen to-day—the Pilgrim's Rest, at Battle; the Maison Dieu, at Dover; the Hostel of God Begot, at Winchester. At one such place—the Hospital of St. Cross, outside Winchester—the practice of hospitality, in a mild form, survives to-day. There, if you choose to call for it, you may still receive, in perpetuation of old custom, the Wayfarer's Dole, which is a piece of bread and a mug of small beer. Other of these hostels developed from charitable refuges into regular inns, and remain so to-day; notably the *George* at Glastonbury, the *New Inn* at Gloucester, the *George* at

Winchcombe, the *Angel* at Walsingham, the *Red Lion* at Colchester, and the *Star* at Alfriston.

The increase in the number of roads, and the better protection of them, brought with it an increase in travel; and soon it became so great that the monasteries and church-houses could no longer meet the demands made upon them. And so private hospitality ceased, and both the Saxon ale-house and the Plantagenet church-house became the English inn—a Saxon word, meaning, originally, a chamber, and later, a set of chambers. Other houses followed them. Those out-houses that the landed lords had erected on their estates to shelter the overflow of the retinue of a traveller who was their guest, now became inns on a business basis. (A modern example of this practice is the *Rose and Crown*, at Tring, which was originally built by Lord Rothschild for the accommodation of those servants of his guests for whom the mansion had no room.) These houses always bore the crest of the family to whom they belonged, as an indication of their purpose. When they became regular inns they retained the crest, and so became known as the *Pembroke Arms*, the *Chandos Arms*, and so on.

These first inns were scarcely so comfortable as the tramps' kitchens of to-day. They had stone or earthen floors strewn with rushes. In the main room a number of mattresses were laid around the walls, and here the guests slept. Meals were individual matters. Instead of sitting at the great table, and sharing a common meal, as at the church-houses, each man ate such food as he had with him or could purchase from the house. Bread, meat and beer was the usual fare, varied occasionally by fish or capon. Beds were a half-penny, candles a farthing, soup a farthing. These were the prices paid in 1331, by a warden and two fellows of Merton College. Jusserand, in his *English Wayfaring Life*, quotes the

whole bill for one day of travel and inning. It totals 2s. 3d.

Inns of this sort, "for the receipt, relief and lodging of wayfaring persons travelling from place to place," were well established by the time of Edward I., but not until the fourteenth century do we find recognition and regulation of them. This arose, as most regulations arise, out of public complaint of abuses. The chief point of complaint was excessive prices, though, even allowing for the larger meaning of the penny, 2s. 3d. for a day's food and night's rest for three people hardly sounds excessive. But perhaps this particular bill was not representative. Certainly there must have been gross imposition, or action would not have been taken. Since, up to the reign of Edward III., there were no laws upon the matter, and innkeepers had everything their own way, we can appreciate the temptation to overcharge. But at last the public, as the poor worm will, got restive under the iron heel, and so persistent were the complaints that in 1349 a bill was passed, compelling all hostelers and herbergers to make reasonable charges, under penalty of refunding to the swindled guest double the sum taken from him. Even that, coming on top of the public anger, was not sufficient to bring them to order. Just as traders to-day laugh at the regulations of the Food Council, so did the innkeepers of that day laugh at this law; so that four years later another, and stronger, law was passed to modify the "great and outrageous cost of victuals kept up in all the realm by inn-keepers to the great detriment of the people travelling across the realm." Mayors and justices were charged to inquire in all places of the "deeds and outrages" of hostelers and their kind, and to deal summarily with them. The scandal appears, however, to have been settled by the innkeepers themselves, and by the natural increase of business. Once

the inn was established, it began to grow: competition then stepped in and did what the law couldn't.

We hear few complaints of overcharging to-day, and even in the eighteenth century it was so uncommon that when a case was reported it created an outcry. You remember Smollett's Latin-quoting schoolmaster-innkeeper, and his ingenious swindling of Roderick Random and Strap? A real-life match to that exists in a bill of 1762, belonging to the *Red Lion*, of Canterbury. It was rendered to the French Ambassador, who had rested there for one night, on his way to take up his duties in London. The party was twelve in all: the bill for lodging and a light supper was £44. 10s. 8d., which, to come into line with to-day's values, should be multiplied by three. The item for the lodging of the twelve people was only £1. 7s. 0d. Tea, coffee, and chocolate were £1. 4s. 0d. The rest was made up on food and wine, most of which was neither ordered nor consumed. The Ambassador protested, paid the bill, and talked about it in town. The Act of Edward III. had by then, it appears, fallen into abeyance; had it been active, and had the Ambassador appealed on it, he might have received his night's entertainment free, plus a bonus of £88. The public did his business for him. When the story got about, the inn was boycotted, and its owner in a few months was bankrupt. Doubtless the same fate fell upon many of the overreachers of the fourteenth century.

Until 1550 taverns and inns were unlicensed. Any man could then open such a house, as to-day he can open a drapery or boot shop; though, in the matter of ale-houses, if these were conducted in a disorderly manner, to the annoyance of neighbours, the justices could close them and debar the keeper from selling ale. When the licensing system began it carried with it a fixed code for the conduct of such places, and incidentally

an excessive harrying of the poor innkeeper, which has persisted to these days. The most numerous and vexatious laws arose during the reign of James I. These were not wholly necessary laws, but laws for the purpose of enriching the then licenser of inns, Giles Mompesson, successor of Sir Walter Raleigh, who had held the office under Elizabeth. This scoundrel, who served Massinger as the model of *Sir Giles Overreach*, used a method which is used to-day by collectors for charitable organisations. Instead of acting as a State servant with a salary, he secured, with the help of the amiable George Villiers, a monopoly of the business, on the terms of four-fifths of the receipts to the State and one-fifth to himself. This meant that he fixed the licensing fees, and collected them; he fixed a code of offences and the amount of the penalties for them; he gave or withheld licences at his pleasure, and of course he took bribes from disorderly houses, and persecuted respectable innkeepers into making handsome presents if they wished to retain their licences. He had a good run of four years before public outcry brought him to the Bar of the House. There, his conduct of the monopoly was examined, and so much evidence was brought against him, that he was expelled from the House, degraded from his knighthood, fined ten thousand pounds, and banished.

Even before Mompesson's numberless laws, innkeepers, from 1550 onwards, were the object of continual regulation. In the sixteenth century a tavern-keeper, whose true business was victualling, was forbidden, under severe penalties, to shelter travellers, while an innkeeper was similarly forbidden to permit inhabitants of his town to "tipple" in his house. That was permitted only in the ale-house. Here are one or two of the regulations of 1596, which innkeepers were compelled to observe:

That every one of them be continually furnished as well with convenient lodging as also with good and wholesome victuals, fit to serve all such as upon honest occasions shall repair unto the house.

That none of them do lodge any person or persons but such as he will answer for.

If knowledge do come to the town of any robbery committed, then every one of them shall declare to the constables the names, apparel, and, if he can, the dwelling-place also of all such persons as did lodge in his house two days before or two days after such robbery was committed.

"Closing-time" for drinks in those days was nine o'clock in the summer, and eight o'clock in the winter. Drinks were sold at prices fixed by the justices of the locality. It was the essential duty of an innkeeper to provide shelter and refreshment to all genuine travellers at any hour of the day or night; and this law is still binding upon those hotels which have an "inn-licence." You can still bring an innkeeper, or his porter, out of bed at three o'clock in the morning, and if you desire shelter or food, he is compelled to supply it. (A hotel-keeper is not compelled to do this.) Should he refuse, you can, if you think it worth while, report him to the licensing justices; but you must first be certain that he holds an "inn-licence." He is not, however, entirely at your mercy. The law allows him certain safeguards. He can refuse to admit you if he has "reason to believe" that you are intoxicated, verminous, of criminal appearance (whatever that is) or otherwise an undesirable person to put among his other guests. The looseness of the phrase "reason to believe" gives him so wide a discretion that the law almost defeats itself. He does not have to prove that you were any of these things: he need only state that you appeared to him to be. But

you can still have your revenge on a churlish innkeeper who has previously refused you. You can knock him up again and again. He can refuse you again, but he must get up and see you in order to have reason to believe that you are undesirable.

In the sixteenth century many an inn was indicted for refusing shelter to travellers when they could have given it, and many a tavern and ale-house was indicted for giving shelter to travellers who could not find shelter at an inn. The attitude of human nature to the law was the same then as now. Tell a man that he must do a thing, and another man that he must not do a thing, and the one won't and the other will. The laws against taverns and ale-houses sheltering guests were necessary in the interests of public order, since many tavern-holders were quick to perceive the profits to be derived from the temporary accommodation of temporarily united couples and other loose company. Henry Chettle, in his *Kind-Heart's Dream*, published in 1592, presents a landlord of one of these places on his defence, shifting the blame, as usual, on the man higher up:

> I come up to London, and fall to be some tapster, hostler, or chamberlain in an inn. Well, I get me a wife; with her a little money. When we are married, seek a house we must. No other occupation have I but to be an ale-draper. The landlord will have forty pounds fine and twenty marks a year. He knows by honest courses I can never pay the rent. What should I say? Somewhat must be done, or we undone. To be short, what must be, shall be. Indeed, sometimes I have my landlord's countenance before a justice, to cast a cloak over ill-rule, or else he might seek such another tenant to pay his rent so truly.

Taverns were licensed solely for the sale of drink and

food; inns solely for the accommodation of travellers. As every licensed tavern was open to frequent inspection, and thus had litle chance of profiting for long by the undesirable but good-paying guest, the more roguish taverners got round the law in a somewhat comic way. They moved to other houses, and continued to sell ale and to harbour lewd company, but *without* a licence. By this means, they escaped, on indictment, with a lighter penalty than that laid down for disorderly conduct in a *licensed* house. I recall a companion case of these days. Some time ago I used to lunch at a Soho restaurant which had no wine-licence. It "sent out" for your wine—or at least went through the motions of doing so. Often I lunched there rather late, sometimes at three o'clock; but, whatever the hour, any wine we wanted was served. One afternoon, at about four o'clock, we were finishing a flask of Chianti, when the police walked in. They saw our wine, and the wine of one or two other customers, and a few days later the restaurateur was summoned to Marlborough Street and charged with selling drinks out of permitted hours. He refused to plead, and contested the legality of the charge on the ground that it could only be brought against the owner of licensed premises. He won that round. The police had to withdraw the charge, and frame another charge of selling wine without a licence.

The unlicensed houses of the sixteenth century, after a few convictions under the standing law, were soon suppressed by sterner measures — imprisonment and whipping—and there followed a general improvement in taverns and inns. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, they were well adapted to their times. Fynes Moryson, writing in 1617, gives a clear picture of their conduct and economy:

> As soon as a passenger comes to an inn, the servants

run to him, and one takes his horse, and walks him till he be cold, then rubs him and gives him meat, yet I must say that they are not much to be trusted in this last point without the eye of the master or his servant to oversee them. Another servant gives the passenger his private chamber, and kindles his fire; a third pulls off his boots and makes them clean. Then the host or hostess visits him, and if he will eat with the host, or at a common table with others, his meal will cost him sixpence, or in some places but fourpence (yet this course is less honourable and not used by Gentlemen); but if he will eat in his chamber he commands what meat he will, according to his appetite, and as much as he thinks fit for him and his company, yea, the kitchen is open to him, to command the meat to be dressed as he best likes. While he eats, if he have company especially, he shall be offered music, which he may freely take or refuse, and if he be solitary the musicians will give him the good-day in the morning. . . . Lastly, a man cannot more freely command at home in his own house than he may do in his inn, and at parting, if he give some few pence to the chamberlain and ostler, they wish him a happy journey.

A more intimate and domestic picture is offered by a conversation-manual, published in 1593, for the mutual use of Englishmen and Frenchmen travelling in each other's country. The English is printed on one page, with the French opposite:

Mine host, when shall we sup? I have a good stomach.

When it shall please you, sir. It is fasting day to-day—it is our Lady's even. There are eggs in the shell, buttered, poached, and fried.

I must eat some flesh, for I love not eggs or fish.

Then there is a very good caponet. There is a fat capon, a Turkey-cock, a fat goose, a dozen of larks, a couple of good fat rabbits. There is a good lamprey, and here is the side of a salmon.

To you, mine host. To you, mine hostess. I will pledge you here.

A little later we have the going to bed.

Mine host, I will go to rest. Let somebody show me my chamber.

When you will, my daughter shall show you the way.

Good-night, mine host. Good-night, hostess. God give you good-night and good rest everybody.

The daughter accompanies him to his room, where (apparently following the custom of the times) she assists him in undressing and tucks him in. The dialogue at this point becomes a little too Tudor for the emancipated and outspoken days of the twentieth century.

The relations between innkeeper and traveller were far more personal then than now. The innkeeper called upon the traveller upon arrival, sat with him, dined with him (if he were lonely), and in the evening showed him the principal points of the town and related anecdotes of its history. Sometimes he brought out his sons and daughters, if accomplished, to entertain the guest with song and music. He received his guests on level ground. His attitude was one of dignified compliance with their wishes; he was collaborator and companion, rather than a servant receiving orders. Ben Jonson presents such an innkeeper of this period in his *New Inn*.

Guest: Discharge the house, and get my horses ready. Bid the groom bring them to the back gate.

Host: What mean you, sir?

Guest: To take fair leave, mine host.

Host: I hope, my guest, though I have talked somewhat above my share, at large, and been in the altitudes, the extravagants, neither myself, nor any of mine have given you the cause to quit my house thus on the sudden.

Guest: No; I affirm it on my faith. Excuse me from such a rudeness. I was now beginning to taste and love you, and am heartily sorry any occasion should be so compelling to urge my abrupt departure thus. But necessity's a tyrant, and commands it.

Host: She shall command me first to fire my bush; then break up house. Or, if that will not serve, to break with all the world, turn county bankrupt in mine own town, upon the market-day. And be protested by my butter and eggs, to the last bodge of oats and pottle of hay. Ere you shall leave me I will break my Heart. I'll pull my sign down, convert mine inn to an alms-house, turn it to an academy of rogues, or give it away for a free school to bring up beggars in, and send them to the canting Universities, before you leave me!

Shakespeare also presented the type in the familiarity of the landlord of the *Garter*, at Windsor; the companionable hostess of the period is crystallised in Mistress Quickly. Pepys encountered the type at the Salisbury *George*, and if his description of host and inn may be taken as representative of hosts and inns of the time, the hosts appear to have been better than their inns:

Come about ten at night to a little inn, where we were fain to go into a room where a pedlar was in bed, and made him rise, and there wife and I lay, and in a truckle-bed Betty Turner and Willett. Good

beds, and the master of the house a sober, understanding man, and I had good discourse with him about this country's matters, as wool and corn and other things. And he also merry, and made us mighty merry at supper, about manning the new ship at Bristol with none but men whose wives do master them. Up, finding our beds good, but lousy, which made us merry. We set out, the reckoning and servants coming to 9s. 6d.

The inns of this period, and for nearly two centuries, had no bars, no set dinner, and no dining-room: these did not come in until the late eighteenth century. Guests of any social pretensions had their meals served in private rooms, and the meals were of their ordering. Even those who merely halted to drink were given private rooms—a practice that prevails in many country taverns to-day. Those of no social pretensions, such as the company of the carrier's waggon, were accommodated in the kitchen, which, on a cold night, was the best spot in the inn. The novels of the eighteenth century present many pictures of these kitchens. One of the sharpest is that with which Smollett opens *Sir Lancelot Greaves*:

It was on the great northern road from York to London, about the beginning of October, and about the hour of eight in the evening, that four travellers were, by a violent shower of rain, driven for shelter into a little public-house on the side of the highway, distinguished by a sign which was said to exhibit the figure of a black lion. The kitchen, in which they were assembled, was the only room for entertainment in the house, paved with red bricks, remarkably clean, furnished with three or four Windsor chairs, adorned with shining plates of pewter, and

copper saucepans nicely scoured, that even dazzled the eyes of the beholder; while a cheerful fire of sea-coal blazed in the chimney.

Parson Adams and Joseph Andrews seldom rose above the kitchen on their journey. Roderick and Strap, in their advance upon London, also had to put up with it. Anything would do for foot-travellers, but those who were suspected of being "quality" were treated in those days as no human creature—king or pope—should be treated by his fellow-man. A quick inspection of newly-arrived travellers was usually sufficient to determine whether they should be bowed to "Blenheim" or "Rose," or left to find their own way to the kitchen. Sometimes, though, when the status of a traveller was not clearly indicated by his dress and his style of travelling, and a snobbish squire was ordered to the kitchen, there was trouble. Tom Jones was always creating misunderstanding, and landladies were always apologising for treating him as a tramp, or rating him for having had from them the treatment of a "gentleman." There was the landlady at the inn where he enlisted in the forces. "As the lieutenant had assured her that he was certainly some young gentleman of fashion, she now determined to show him all the respect in her power; for, to speak truly, this was one of those houses where gentlemen, to use the language of advertisements, meet with civil treatment for their money." And that other landlady, discussing Jones with Partridge:

> Nay, if I thought he was a gentleman's son, though he was a bye-blow, I should behave to him in another-guess manner; for many of these bye-blows come to be great men, and as my poor first husband used to say, never affront any customer that's a gentleman.

And the landlady at the *Lion*, at Upton-on-Severn (I drank to Henry Fielding in its hall a few days ago), who, when Jones arrived with his half-naked female friend, first attacked him with a broom, and then became abject with apologies:

> "Lud, madam," says she, "how should I have imagined that lady of your quality would appear in such a dress? I am sure, madam, if I had once suspected that your ladyship was your ladyship, I would sooner have burnt my tongue out than have said what I have said."

This slavish worship of quality, and contempt for the merely honest, is a blot on the eighteenth-century innkeeper. He had lost the well-mannered independence of the seventeeth-century innkeeper, and it was not regained until the great days of road-travel, 1800–1835, when the innkeeper of a town was only less important than the squire, and often served as its mayor. Observe the cringing note of this endorsement of Boswell's bill at the *Green Man*, Ashbourne:

> Mrs. Kilingley's duty waits upon Mr. Boswell—is exceedingly obliged to him for this favour; whenever he comes this way hopes for a continuance of the same. Would Mr. Boswell name this house to his extensive acquaintance, it would be a singular favour conferred upon one who has it not in her power to make any other return but her most grateful thanks and sincerest prayers for his happiness in time and in blessed eternity.

Carl Moritz, the German pastor who travelled through England on foot and by stage-coach, records in his journal many examples of this class nonsense:

They showed me into the kitchen, and set me down to sup at the same table with some soldiers and the servants. I now for the first time, found myself in one of those kitchens which I had so often read of in Fielding's fine novels. The chimney in this kitchen, where they were roasting and boiling, seemed to be taken off from the rest of the room, and enclosed by a wooden partition. The rest of the apartment was made use of as a sitting and eating room. All round on the sides were shelves with pewter dishes and plates, and the ceiling was well stored with provisions of various kinds, such as sugar-loaves, black puddings, hams, sausages, flitches of bacon, etc. While I was eating a post-chaise drove up; and in a moment both the folding doors were thrown open, and the whole house set in motion, in order to receive, with all due respect, these guests, who, no doubt, were supposed to be persons of consequence. . . . The next morning I put on clean linen, and dressed myself as well as I could. And now, when I thus made my appearance, they did not, as they had the evening before, show me into the kitchen, but into the parlour. I was also now addressed by the most respectful term, *Sir;* whereas the evening before I had been called only *Master;* by this latter appellation, I believe, it is usual to address only farmers and quite common people.

The social standing of the kitchen, and the general attitude towards it, is well illustrated by the behaviour of Sophia Western's waiting-woman, on her gracing it with her presence:

While the supper was preparing, Mrs. Abigail began to lament she had not ordered a fire in the parlour; but, she said, that was now too late. "How-

ever," said she, "I have novelty to recommend a kitchen; for I do not believe I ever eat in one before." Then, turning to the post-boys, she asked them, "Why they were not in the stable with their horses? If I must eat my hard fare here, madam," cries she to the landlady, "I beg the kitchen may be kept clear, that I may not be surrounded by all the blackguards in town; as for you, sir," says she to Partridge, "you look somewhat like a gentleman, and may sit still, if you please; I don't desire to disturb anybody but mob."

Right up to the early days of the nineteenth century this class distinction persisted. De Quincey has recorded the different treatment given by the inns to those who rode inside the coach and those who rode outside:

It was the fixed assumption of the four inside people that they, the illustrious quaternion, constituted a porcelain variety of the human race, whose dignity would have been compromised by exchanging one word of civility with the three miserable delf-ware outsides. What words, then, could express the horror and the sense of treason in that case, which *had* happened, where all three outsides (the trinity of pariahs) made a vain attempt to sit down at the same breakfast-table with the consecrated four? The course taken with the infatuated outsides was that the waiter, beckoning them away from the privileged *salle-à-manger*, sang out, "This way, my good men," and then enticed these good men away to the kitchen.

And Samuel Bamford, a Lancashire mill-operative and agitator, who tramped from London to Manchester about that time, was even turned away from some inns because he arrived on foot:

I arrived at the celebrated village of Woburn, where I stepped into the first public-house I came to —I think it was the sign of the *Bedford Arms*. The place seemed very fine, and the people I saw moving about looked, I thought, in a strange supercilious way at me. At length I desired a woman to bring me a glass of ale, intending it as a preliminary to breakfast. She did not pause a moment to receive my order, but looking down, swept past me. No one attended to me, and soon after I asked again for a glass of ale; this servant also went away without speaking, but in a short while a female of superior appearance came and said they did not entertain foot travellers. I expressed my surprise at that, and assured her I was both able and willing to pay for whatever I called for. She said she did not doubt it, but it was an invariable rule of the house not to serve persons travelling on foot. Could I not have a draught of ale, I asked. No; foot travellers could not have anything there. I accordingly rose, and begged her to inform her employer that, if other engagements did not press me, I would go before the nearest magistrate or the Duke of Bedford himself, and prefer a complaint against the occupier for refusing to entertain a traveller without sufficient cause.

To-day, when the keenest observer has difficulty in deciding who's who, such distinctions as this are seldom made. It did once happen to me to be refused at an inn because I was a walker, but as the district was given over for that week to a car-show, the landlord was possibly justified in holding his rooms for motorists only. On one other occasion I was refused a room. I had been walking for four hours in the rain, and I was wet to the shirt. I wanted to get back to London, but I did not want to sit for three hours in wet clothes. At the small

town where my walk ended, I sought an inn. As the season was summer, and hot, I knew that none of the inns would have coal fires going (most inns now cook by gas or electricity), so I asked if I could have a room with a gas-fire for an hour. They were full up. I went to the next inn, and made the same request. They were full up. I went to another. They had no gas-fires. I went to another. Full up. Here, in desperation, I made a lengthier statement of my case. They told me that they had no gas-fires, nor any means of drying my clothes; but that there was a newly-opened modern inn at the end of the town, which had a central-heating circuit. If this had the main boiler going, it might be able to do what I wanted. When I found this inn they took me in at once, gave me a room, and took my clothes down to the boiler. While waiting for them to dry, I asked Boots why the town was so full. He said it wasn't. I said all the inns were full. He said they weren't. I told him the story of my search for a room with a gas-fire, whereupon he said, "A-a-ah . . . that explains it. Of course they refused you." "Why of course?" "Well, if you'd told 'em at first that all you wanted was to dry your clothes, I dessay they'd have fixed it for you. Those that had gas-fires. But you didn't, according to you. You comes in, looking fed up and done to the wide, and asks for a room with a gas-fire for an hour. *Course*, they'd be full up. Hotels get quite enough suicides unknowingly. They ain't likely to *invite* 'em in and give 'em a gas-fire."

The young man was right. Suicide has no *réclame*. Two or three of our old inns, which have been the setting of murders, advertise the fact with relish; I have never known an inn or hotel other than secret about a suicide. They won't even admit it when everybody knows it. The Press, too, is careful to-day of the sensitive fame of our hotels. When a suicide happens at

a London hotel, the hotel is never named. It is simply "a hotel in Kensington" or a "hotel in the West End." If ever you see an ottoman being removed from the side door of a West End hotel, you are not seeing a disposal of second-hand furniture. You are seeing a delicate act of consideration for the hotel's good name. Inside the ottoman, so a night-porter told me, is the body.

West End hotels bring me back to the development of the inn. It is not easy to realise at once that the *Savoy Hotel*, the *Ritz*, the *Grosvenor House*, have grown out of those first monastic houses. But, though the stages cannot be clearly traced, they have. The changes through which the inn has passed in its nine hundred years of life have been continuous, and, therefore, imperceptible. The sentimental are prone to regret the modernising of old inns. They forget that throughout its life the inn was constantly being modernised; that it was the aim of every landlord, then as now, to make his inn an inn of its time. We are aware that the inn on the Bath Road, at which we lunched yesterday, was a sixteenth-century inn; aware, too, that its dining-room, and its food, and its manners, were not those of the sixteenth century; but we have no means of tracing when or how the little changes crept in that brought it from its then condition to its present condition.

Change moves always at the pace of its time. We can *see* change at work to-day. We pass through a London street on, say, Monday, and note the buildings that have been familiar to us these twenty years. We pass again on the following Monday, and those buildings are mere skeletons. We cross Piccadilly Circus at the beginning of March, and note the old chop-house where we have often lunched. We cross it again a few days later, and the chop-house is closed and is shrouded in scaffolding. A few days later it is gone. A few weeks

later, where the old chop-house was is a London theatre. But, in the past, change moved at the pace of the pack-horse train, the stage-coach, the mail-coach, or the railway; and it was only to be noted by those who returned to a given spot at long intervals. No doubt the traveller of the fifteenth century, who had grown accustomed to rush-strewn floors, noted with irritation the sudden new fashion, which had taken thirty years in coming, of sand or sawdust; and the finicky innovation of forks. And no doubt the traveller of the seventeenth century noted the sudden new fashion of carpets, which had arrived so slowly that the inhabitants could not tell when it first came. And the traveller of the eighteenth noted the sudden new fashion of claret in place of the seventeenth-century Rhenish; and the traveller who remembered the eighteenth century noted with consternation the social frost announced by the nineteenth century innovation of separate tables in the dining-room.

These changes, as I say, were always at work, since the inn, more than any other feature of English life, has truly existed (as many businesses falsely claim to exist) for service. All manner of service has been demanded from it, and given; and the meeting of these demands has meant constant reconstruction and adaptation to popular taste. The structure of the theatre, as it exists to-day—pit, balconies, and boxes—is simply an enlarged copy of the early inn-yard, and its galleries of bedrooms; and the vaudeville and cabaret of to-day are simply a development of the tavern sing-song. When theatres were built, and the inn was no more used for dramatic performances, it at once adapted itself to other purposes. It became an Assize Court at need; sometimes a prison; sometimes a Shire Hall; sometimes a political headquarters. Always it was altering and adapting itself; so that to-day, if you find

an inn with a fifteenth century birthmark, you can trace in its structure its development through the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It has served almost every public purpose, and when it disappears, it is difficult to see what can be put in its place to take over its multifarious activities.

An example of its swift adaptation to modern needs is to be noted towards the end of the eighteenth century, when certain town inns perceived a new class of business, and turned themselves to it. This business lay between the ale-house, with its common kitchen-dining-room, and the inn proper, with its private suites; and it brought forth the Commercial Inn for bagmen. Commercial and Posting-House was its description. It was created for that new class of traveller whose presence on the roads announced the opening of the industrial age, and it brought with it the Commercial Room, with a tariff of its own, and the Coffee Room, for ordinary travellers, at the ordinary tariff.

As travel became more general, there was invented an institution which, like most inventions, set everybody wondering why it was never thought of before. This was the thing that we call Holidays. With the spread of the holiday habit, inns were no longer mere pauses on a journey. They became temporary residences, or Family Inns, and enterprising innkeepers adapted themselves to securing both kinds of the new traffic. Hence the term, still seen on country inns to-day, "Family and Commercial House." An inn at Tewkesbury made a bold bid for every kind of custom; the *Swan* of that town still bears across its front the legend: *Swan Inn Hotel and Tavern.* From the family pleasure inn the next step was to the Hotel. This arrived about 1820, and it took some time to secure public favour. It brought page-boys, and liveried porters, and "young ladies" at the reception desk, and at first the public

didn't like them. It also brought "the manager," whom the public liked still less. Dickens had some unpleasant things to say about it in his *Uncommercial Traveller*—the kind of thing the middle-aged always say about anything new—and Mrs. Gore expressed the general attitude in one of her descriptive papers:

> Mine host, whether of the Garter or Star, was formerly a mighty pleasant fellow, who drank and jested with his customers, making them pay for his jokes and potations. Mine host of the Hotel is a well-bred gentleman, whom its inmates never behold from the day when he inaugurates them in their apartments, with as many bows as would place an unpopular candidate at the head of the poll, to that on which, with similar ceremonial, he presents them their bill.

The hotel of that period may still be seen in a few inland and most seaside towns. If you have not the time or the taste to travel to seaside towns in search of them, you may discover what they looked like by buying an A.B.C. Railway Guide. There, in the advertisement section, you may find pictures of them, printed from blocks made, apparently, in 1850. But they have not survived in such numbers as their elder and livelier brethren. They quickly became out of date, and as there was no excuse, on the plea of architectural beauty or historical interest, for preserving them by careful restoration, they were pulled down and re-built. Only our seaside towns respected the pathos of their out-of-dateness.

The next stage was the Railway or Station Hotel, but as that, after a mere fifty years, has gone to sleep—we hope for ever—the less said about it, the kinder.

By 1850 the inn of the high roads had been banished

into obscurity, not to return until the first decade of the twentieth century. Crabbe has given us a good picture of the state of those inns. He was not, of course, writing of an inn ruined by railways, but the picture fits many of the once-great inns in 1850:

Large the domain, but all within combine
To correspond with the dishonour'd sign;
And all around dilapidates; you call—
But none replies—they're inattentive all;
At length a ruin'd stable holds your steed,
While you through large and dirty rooms proceed,
Spacious and cold; a proof they once had been
In honour—now magnificently mean;
Till in some small half-furnished room you rest,
Whose dying fires denote it had a guest.
In those you pass'd where former splendour reign'd,
You saw the carpets torn, the paper stain'd;
Squares of discordant glass in windows fix'd,
And paper oil'd in many a space betwixt;
A soil'd and broken sconce, a mirror crack'd,
With table under-propp'd and chairs new-back'd;
A marble side-slab with ten thousand stains,
And all an ancient tavern's poor remains.
With much entreaty, they your food prepare,
And acid wine afford, with meagre fare;
Heartless you sup, and when a dozen times,
You've read the fractur'd window's senseless rhymes,
You reach a chilling chamber, where you dread
Damps, hot or cold, from a tremendous bed.
Late comes your sleep, and you are waken'd soon
By rustling tatters of the old festoon.

In the opinion of that period the English inn was for ever dead, and the Railway Hotel must be accepted. The road was dead, and as the inn was born with the

road, so it must die with it. Nothing could revive it; never would the roads be used again. (You may remember that in 1905, something of the sort was being said about the horse.) And so, with its passing, came an outburst of those pæans of the inn with which we are all so familiar. The abolition of the monasteries could not have aroused deeper feeling among the religious than the passing of the inn, and the offering of the Railway Hotel in its place, caused among the older travelling public. All the anathema they had pronounced upon it while it was still with them was taken back, and they spoke only from sentimental memories of its goodness. I spare you the hackneyed quotations, and give you Mrs. Gore again:

> Inns of good dimension and repute, where the mail-coach supped or dined, and the great northern families stopped to sleep; where portly sirloins, huge rounds of beef, hams of inviting complexion, fowls, supportable even after those of dainty London, spitch-cocked eels, and compotes of wine-sours, were evermore forthcoming on demand. What home-brewed—what home-baked—what cream-cheese—what snow-white linen—what airy chambers—and what a jolly-faced old gentleman, and comely old gentlewomen, to bid you welcome. It was a pleasure to arrive—a pain to depart. The very Boots seemed to receive his gratuity reluctantly. The waiters *really* wished you a safe and pleasant journey. The chambermaid, after keeping you in hot water during your stay, gave you a wârm farewell. There was a barnyard homeliness of good cheer about the place. How different from the flashy gaudiness of a station-house albergo!

Although it is now in a renaissance, taking a modern

line from the inspiration of tradition—as all the arts have to do if they are to live—there is no doubt that it reached its perfection in the great coaching age. It was then fully in the social landscape, and innkeepers were personages of importance. Those were its classical days, and all the known and celebrated innkeepers are of those days. These people were not your humble and obedient servants. Innkeeping had become a dignified calling, and their attitude to their guests was the attitude of the doctor to his patient or the lawyer to his client. Although the conduct of an inn approximates to the conduct of a home, it is, paradoxically, better done by men than by women, and most of the names that have been recorded are the names of men. But there were a few famous women innkeepers. There was the redoubtable Mrs. Nelson, of the Whitechapel *Bull*, a widow, who not only managed the business of a great inn, and controlled a staff of male servants, and terrified would-be roysterers, but also ran a line of coaches on the eastern roads, and that famous coach, the Devonport Quicksilver, on the western road. And there was Mrs. Mountain, who not only controlled the *Saracen's Head*, at Snow Hill, but managed a coach-building business as well. There was Mrs. Botham, of the *Pelican*, at Speenhamland, famous, as James Quin said, for its enormous bill; there were the Misses Dibble, who ran the *Anchor*, at Ripley; and there is Miss Murray, who still controls the sole surviving galleried inn in London—the *George*, in Borough High Street.

Of men, perhaps the most famous is Robert Lawrence, of the Shrewsbury *Lion*. He died in 1806, and his tombstone in the parish churchyard records his public-spirited services to the town. The most beneficial of these services was his single-handed—and successful—struggle to get the Holyhead-London coaches to run through Shrewsbury instead of through Chester. What

this meant in business in those days is easily understood. During his reign at the *Lion*, he was known and respected up and down the length of that road. Another, not so well known, but equally deserving, was Cooper Thornhill, owner of the *Bell*, at Stilton. It was he who discovered in a Leicestershire farm-house a certain cheese. He liked it, and ordered regular supplies of it for the *Bell*, and sold it to travellers at half-a-crown a pound. Hence the world-famous Stilton cheese, which is not—and never was—made at Stilton. Two doctors figure in the annals of innkeeping—Dr. Stott, who kept the *Crown*, at Boroughbridge, and Dr. Alderston, who kept the *Angel*, at Ferrybridge. For many years the *George*, an old galleried inn at Reading, was owned by an actor—Henry Nevill, a well-known member of Herbert Tree's company; and I believe there is a wayside inn in Hampshire, near the one-time home of a famous playwright, which bears over its doorway the legend: "George Bernard Shaw; Licensed to sell Beer and Tobacco to be consumed on the Premises." I have not seen it, but friends of mine have.

The present excellent condition of the *Maid's Head*, at Norwich, is mainly due to a landlord who was not, by experience or intention, an innkeeper at all. He did not take it over as a business matter: he was an antiquarian and historian of Norfolk, Mr. Walter Rye, who took it over from altruistic motives. The story is told in the excellent pamphlet issued by the inn, which quotes Mr. Rye's letter on the subject:

> It was rumoured that when Mr. Webster (who and whose wife had been rather the personal friends of his guests than ordinary innkeepers) left the *Maid's Head*, the whole scope of the old house—the nearest approach to the typical old hostel that I ever saw—was going to be changed; that it was to be let to a

big brewer, and be turned into a commercial inn, with a coloured glass bar, a billiard-room, and the rest of it; and, in fact, that the whole place was to be spoiled, and no longer be a refuge for those who like peace and quiet and old surroundings.

By spending some thousands of pounds upon its restoration and renovation, Mr. Rye was able to revivify it in its old frame, and there it stands to-day, tenderly guarded and nourished by his successor as a monument to his zeal.

A famous host of the North country not only achieved the friendship of poets in his lifetime, but earned the distinction of having his epitaph written by a poet after his death. This was Anthony Wilson, host of the *Swan* at Grasmere, who died in 1831. Wordsworth knew him, and makes reference, in one of his many doggerel moments, to his amateur attempt at painting his own sign:

> Who does not know the famous *Swan*,
> Object uncouth, and yet our boast,
> For it was painted by the host.
> His own conceit the figure planned,
> 'Twas coloured all by his own hand.

The epitaph was written by Hartley Coleridge, who was also, it seems, in a doggerel mood:

> Pause, traveller. Sleeps beneath this humble tomb
> The host that cheered thee with his ready smile;
> Three youthful sons have met the common doom;
> Two lie in this, one in a distant isle.
> This solemn sign of piety—not pride—
> The sons that still survive have sanctified.

A more pointed epitaph is quoted by Mr. Charles G.

Harper in his delightful work—the first of its kind—on old inns; the epitaph to Richard Philpots, of the *Bell*, at Belbroughton:

To tell a merry or a wondrous tale
Over a chearful glass of nappy Ale,
In harmless mirth was his supreme delight;
To please his Guests or Friends by day or night.
But no fine tale, how well soever told,
Could make the tyrant Death his stroak withhold.
That fatal stroak has laid him here in dust
To rise again once more with joy, we trust.

The epitaph of John Wigglesworth, of Whalley, is an example of the high esteem in which reputable innkeepers were held:

HERE LIES THE BODY
OF
JOHN WIGGLESWORTH

More than fifty years he was the perpetual innkeeper in this Town. Notwithstanding the temptations of that dangerous calling, he maintained good order in his House, kept the Sabbath Day Holy, frequented the Public Worship with his family, induced his guests to do the same, and regularly partook of the Holy Communion. He was also bountiful to the poor, in private, as well as in public, and by the blessings of Providence on a life so spent, died possessed of competent Wealth.

As the inn reflects England and the English home, so does the innkeeper of the dignified kind reflect the Englishman. Chaucer's description of the host of the *Tabard* is, with minor emendations, good for all efficient hosts, and a fair portrait of the Englishman. Indeed,

if one wished to isolate the typical Englishman for study, I fancy one would find him in the master of a really good inn. In no calling (save, perhaps, medicine) is the tradition of courtesy, service, and respect for the calling more closely observed; and if the innkeeper could fulfil his varied and incessant duties without meriting our criticism, he would be not man but angel. Not only has he to know more than most business men: he has to *be* more. He must adapt himself to all types. He must be silent with the silent, and chatty with the chatty. He must be able to talk to the sportsman, the shopman, the lord, the amateur politician, the lawyer, the stockbroker, the old man, the dashing youth, the facetious man, the gloomy man, the pompous man, the loose man, the teetotaller and the tippler; and must be able to make each believe that he is interested in him. It is his personality that makes or mars an inn. He may have a delightful inn, delightfully furnished, an excellent cook and excellent servants; but if he himself is not a pleasant person these things will count for nothing. People will not "take to" the place; they will be aware of something lacking in the atmosphere, whether they see him or not; and they will warn their friends against it.

Fortunately for travellers, the dyspeptic host is rare. Mostly he follows type and tradition. The venerable Harry Preston, of Brighton, is in straight descent from the hearty Mr. Henry Bailly, of the fourteenth-century *Tabard*, and the newer host, one might almost say president, of the modern inn, is represented by Mr. John Fothergill, of Thame's *Spread Eagle*, and Mr. Clough Williams Ellis, the architect and writer, who controls the sea-coast inn at Port Meirion.

CHAPTER III

A FIRESIDE TOUR

THAT there are bad inns in England every tourist knows, and it is unfortunate that when we talk of inns we are naturally inclined to single out the bad and take the good in passing. But the very fact that the bad are so memorable is a tribute to the prevailing goodness. England has so many not merely good, but beautiful and delightful, inns, that we have come to take them for granted, as we take virtue in a woman for granted and talk of those who are not virtuous. I myself have personal knowledge of a hundred-and-twenty-two delightful places, and in this chapter I will try to tell you of some of them; though within the limits of a chapter I fear I can do no more than make what Norman Douglas called his book on *London Street Games*—a breathless catalogue.

Some very good inns that I have known have been like some very nice Englishmen—they took a deal of knowing. At first contact they repelled. They were unkempt and ill-furnished. They were slap-dash in manner, and made no attempt to announce their pleasing aspects. They presented their worst to the world, and left their best to be discovered. But if I conquered my repulsion—and, if it was the only inn in the place, I had to—I came after a few days to love it. The landlord may have been negligent in the appointments of his house, and a little too lenient with his servants. He may have been bored when you spoke of his oriel windows and his galleried yard. He may have been so half-asleep as to leave his bedrooms and dining-rooms as

they were when he found them in the year of Jubilee —iron bedsteads and horsehair with the stuffing protruding. But when it came to the rock-bottom of innkeeping—feeding and entertaining the stranger as a fellow-creature—then he won you. And though, in your first half-hour of the place, you had been thinking wistfully of those bright, clean, modern inns, with brilliant decoration and unobtrusive service, after twelve hours in the *Down-at-Heel Arms*, you thought of those places without the least regret. You had become a friend of the house, and a friend of the landlord and the servants; and if they spread you a table of bread and cheese and pickles in the kitchen, it was all one. The house had got you.

I have in mind one such inn in Sussex, that, on my first visit, filled me with disgust. It was untidy; all the meals were late; and it hadn't been decorated or turned-out for, it seemed, fifty years. The atmosphere was cold; everybody was sullen; and I had the feeling that the house might at any moment relax its tension in a scream. I cursed the place and the breakdown that held me there, and I watched the hours creeping off the clock with a longing to hurry them towards next week. But by the afternoon of the next day its tone had changed. Terrific rain kept me indoors, and in a calm despair I went to the bar and by dogged effort dragged the sullen landlord into talk.

Some point in the talk disclosed a mutual acquaintance, and I discovered that the mutual acquaintance had spoken of me when visiting there. After that the inn was mine. It shook off its neurasthenia, and revealed itself as an easy, careless home where every guest was expected to do exactly as he pleased; where he could breakfast at half-past eleven, and lunch at four, and dine at midnight, or at any other hour that suited his disarrangements. I soon learned why the service had been

so bad and the atmosphere so frigid. They were treating me with respect, and as few strangers came to their house they weren't accustomed to treating people with respect, and so did it badly. They had tried to give me soup, fish, and cutlet—thinking that that was what they ought to do—instead of the regular dishes of the house that the regular guests accepted: Sussex pies, rabbit puddings, lamb's fry, and so on. As soon as they discovered that they could treat me as a fellow-creature, the shabby furniture, the untidiness, the slap-dashery, all took on an air of rightness; and by the evening I was in the kitchen, helping the cook-chambermaid to string the beans. By frequent visits to that house I have now passed the third degree in the mysteries of inn-keeping, and could open one of my own. Had there been another inn in that town, of better appearance—there couldn't have been a worse—I should have missed that valuable novitiate.

But it is only in certain moods that I can respond to places of that kind, and only now and then that I am willing to give time to discovering qualities that, in the ordinary course of inn-keeping, should be apparent. Even when I like such places, I cannot grant them admiration. When touring, I look for something more completely achieved, and my admiration is reserved for the great. These remain in the memory with the glow of moments in music and painting; the others remain as an affectionate dog that one has known for a few days. I think of such stone-poems as the *Angel*, at Grantham, and the *George*, which stands in the Vale of Avalon, close upon the supposed resting-place of Guinevere and Arthur; and the *Talbot*, at Oundle, and the *Lygon Arms*, at Broadway. These are the most beautiful buildings of their districts, and some of them the most beautiful homes, furnished and fitted in exquisite tact, and often in a mood of poetry that is seldom evoked for the

furnishing of the great houses around them. They are true mansions, in form and in spirit, and only one or two private mansions, such as Compton Winyates and Markyate Cell, can match them. Where, in Grantham, is anything more beautiful than the *Angel*? Or, in Newark, anything architecturally near the exciting *White Hart*? Or, in Ludlow, such magnificence of carving as at the *Feathers*? These inns are not merely accommodations for travellers to their towns. They are the stars of their towns, and numbers of them figure in the Report on Historical Monuments. The towns themselves have got out of hand: most of them are a mess of shapeless shops and purposeless streets that have no relation whatever to the town's spirit. Their inns alone save them from the contempt they deserve, and what the Prince Albert town hall and the Saxe-Coburg swimming-baths fail miserably to do the inns succeed superbly in doing. In them is the clear and calm expression of civic dignity and domestic pride. They are worth travelling many miles to see, and people do travel many miles to see them.

One goes, for example, to Broadway, solely to see the *Lygon Arms*. Indeed, there is no other reason for going to Broadway. It never was anything but one of a hundred charming villages, and to-day it is not even that. It has been spoiled by well-to-do people playing at the sham peasant-crafts business. When I was last there they had made its street ridiculous with the fake fifteenth-century signs of their fake guilds and crafts, and with shops that belonged to King's Road, Chelsea. It was the more ridiculous because these well-to-do imitators had set up their fake peasantry products alongside the real products of real peasant craftsmen—the cottages and the stone-work of the *Lygon Arms*. It is like putting a scene-painter's set of the Forest of Arden in the middle of a wood. At Ditchling, in Sussex, their

cousins-german are ruining another charming village by similar antics. But with all their back-to-simplicity movement, nothing has yet been produced in Broadway that provides a double reason for visiting it. The *Lygon Arms* really is as good a reason as twelve ordinary reasons.

Both within and without it is beautiful: moreover, it is comfortable, and affords all the feeling of staying at a great and wealthy house. The stone doorway, the street sign, the staircase, the great fire-place, the Cromwell room, the carven ceilings—are perfect specimens of their kind and period; and if some of its other fittings have been imported, they are still chronologically correct. The owners of many old inns are so overcome by the age of their houses that they try to advertise it in every square foot by lashings of oak-chests, warming-pans, armour, toasting-forks, spinning-wheels, and what-not; so that the visitor justifiably wonders whether the man is still an innkeeper, or has drifted into the "antique" and curio trade. Others go to the opposite, and ignore everything that is not Woolworthily up-to-date; like that fourteenth-century inn on Dartmoor, where I found contemporary stone-work covered by wall-paper on which all the flowers of the tropics had gone mad, and mullion windows brought into line with modern thought by the help of pink lace curtains and Venetian blinds.

But at the *Lygon Arms* things are so handled that they are just right. I dare not say that it stands at the head of the aristocracy of inns, but I do say that it is not only a superb living example of the seventeenth-century mansion, but as modern and comfortable a place as any cultivated person of current tastes could wish to live in.

Close to it I put the *Luttrell Arms*, at Dunster. This is a survival, with additions, of the town house of the abbots of the monastery at Cleeve, and the Abbot's

Hall, of the late fifteenth century, is still an active part of the house. The lower chamber, once the kitchen of the inn, with a ceiling of carved oak and a contemporary open fire-place, is now one of the lounges. Every room has its point of interest, and in the various wings of the building every style and period of architecture may be traced. In one room is a magnificent plaster overmantel of the early seventeenth century. In another some Tudor windows. In the Oak Room is a treasury of woodwork. Elsewhere are an eighteenth-century staircase, a seventeenth-century ceiling, and in the grounds may still be seen the emplacements used by Blake during the Civil War. Yet there is no sense of jumble; these things combine to make an effective whole, and after half an hour in it I hesitate in deciding between it and the *Lygon Arms*.

Indeed, in the aristocracy of inns there are so many princes that I shall make no attempt to draft a table of precedence. Each has its season, and its response to mood, when it is perfect. Some of them one remembers as architectural jewels; others, in baser mood, by their excellent kitchens and cellars; others by their furniture; others, again, by their quiet charm or some pleasing eccentricity. The *Lion*, at Buckden, is a fifteenth-century house, once part of the palace of the Bishops of Lincoln. It has been wonderfully restored, and has a gorgeous ceiling in the lounge. But it remains in my memory, not by these matters, but by simpler matters. I recall it with pleasure because, on the night of my arrival, I found that, without my asking, a hot-water bottle had been placed in the bed—a thing I hate, but the thought was kind—and because, just as I was retiring, the manageress, having noted that I had a slight cold, brought me, again voluntarily, a dose of ammoniated quinine.

By its human appeal, I remember, too, the *Bell* at

Clare—a typical, small-town, eighteenth-century inn, standing in the centre of the town and crystallising its life. It remains with me because I saw there last year a continuance of a custom that I thought had died long ago. We had stopped for lunch, and were a little early. At one o'clock the landlord summoned us. "The joint is on the table, gentlemen!" On the dining-room table was the largest sirloin of beef I have ever seen, the largest tureen of gravy, the largest vegetable dishes of potatoes and cauliflower, the largest bowl of fresh fruit salad, the largest bowl of custard, and a monstrous arc of Cheddar. As soon as we were assembled, the landlord took the head of the table, carved for us and lunched with us, pressed us to take more, and talked brightly and sensibly of the times. The price of the lunch was half-a-crown. Its quality was level with Simpson's.

I have said that most English inns appear to have been designed and furnished against winter weather, and this generally is true. But there are exceptions, and these you will find in the Thames Valley. They are the only inns I know whose builders had spring and summer in their minds, and some of my happiest hours have been spent in them. Catalogue: *The Compleat Angler*, at Marlow; the *Beetle and Wedge*, at Moulsford; the *Shillingford Bridge*, just there; the *Swan*, at Streatley; the *Miller of Mansfield*, at Goring; the *French Horn*, at Sonning; the *Elephant*, at Pangbourne; the *Crown*, at Benson; *Skindle's*, at Maidenhead; the *Red Lion*, at Bourne End; the *Barley Mow*, at Clifton Hampden. These inns have a lightness, lent, no doubt, by the water scenery, that is lacking in other inns. Our inns mostly exist to serve the occasions of business: these exist solely to serve the occasions of pleasure. They rank as the princesses of inns against the princes of our highways. Their style is light, their paint is light, their furniture is light, their food is light; and they effuse

always the sense of holiday. Designed for the summer, they carry their grace into the winter; and even in those months when the Thames Valley evokes a shiver, their rooms seem to hold, like a bowl of potpourri, some hoard of the sparkling flush of summer. They have not the rough, hearty, smoky air of the inns of the Great North Road—no coach-yards, no hams hanging in the hall, no Falstaffian cheeses. They are gracious cottage homes, chintzy and lavendery. Their rooms are small, and daintily, rather than baronially, impressive; and their spirit is the spirit that possesses you when drifting in a punt past the Cleeve Woods between Pangbourne and Goring, or when moored under its aspens. They are in a high key. Words cannot reach them. The medium for them is water-colour. Of all the inns I know and love, I love these most. They belong as perfectly to their setting as its trees and its meadows.

That setting—the stretch of the Thames between Reading and Oxford—is for me the most beautiful spot of England. It has the radiant serenity of a lyric of George Herbert; and when Theodore Dreiser told me that it had illuminated for him the spirit that moves behind all English poetry, he gave it its due tribute. I can go back to it spring after spring, and it never stales as more luscious paradises stale. Always it yields new revelation and refreshment. It is not popular, and this helps to preserve its bloom: the few people who come to it are careful not to knock against it. There are no rich rowdies here—only a handful of people as quiet as the movement of the river; just enough to give it the flow of outside breath that keeps it alive, without any danger of making it lively. For the rowdies there is Bray and Cookham and Maidenhead.

Whether the people made the inns, or whether the inns have attracted the people, I don't know, but inns and guests show a charming meeting of like and like.

At first glance, some of these inns are unbelievable. They are postcard inns: so picturesque that you wonder where the catch is. Such outside show of beauty in such isolated spots prepares you, from past experience, to find them a little musty and eighteen-seventy-five-ish within, with a larder of bread and cheese. Actually, they are as I have described, and at one or two of them I have eaten lunches and dinners as well served and as well balanced to the season as any that I have eaten in the best restaurants of London. The stranger may wonder that, being so little known, they are able to do this; but they are not really unknown. Though their custom is small, it is regular and constant. They are like loose clubs. You see the same faces in the dining-rooms year by year, and there is a faint and never expressed feeling of unity among the people, as there always is in a haphazard group whose members are moved by the same beauty. You will notice this faint spirit about the isolated and withdrawn people who cover the floor of Queen's Hall during the Promenade Concerts. They never mix, yet they are surely one. On summer days at the *Miller of Mansfield* you will meet people who, whatever they may be in the outer world, are, for the time, very definitely *Miller of Mansfield* people. They know (and we know) the *Miller's* lobster or salmon mayonnaise, and his cold duck, and his tipsy cake; and it is as though we shared and jealously guarded a secret. It is tacitly understood that we guard it, lest the mob of noisy dull-wits come streaming up in their Bentleys and Rolls-Royces from the down-side of Reading. I am really breaking the undrafted rules in naming it, but I cover myself with the assumption that readers of the *English Heritage* series are just the people who could make one in this backwater of peace without any intimation that they have not always been there.

These inns have no history; pleasure places seldom

have; but since 1875—the date of the discovery of the Thames—they have had a record of good company. Golden lads and lasses have brought their spring to the river's spring, and artists have spent hours of devoted labour upon it. In many a middle-aged home you will still find the river-inn pictures of Leslie, Leader Hodgson, Marcus Stone, and the other R.A.'s who frequented these inns and, once or twice, painted their signs. The *Miller's* sign, not now displayed, was painted by Marcus Stone, and the sign of the *George*, at Wargrave, was painted by two holidaying artists, each doing one side. The *Row Barge*, at Wallingford, and the *Swan*, near Benson, also possess signs by R.A.'s.

As they have no history, and as their only anecdotes concern the size and weight of fish, I will provide a human anecdote of my own.

The first river hotel I ever entered was the *Flower Pot*, at Sunbury, which I entered one Sunday afternoon, when I was sixteen. I had taken a return ticket from Waterloo to some near-by place, and had walked to Sunbury. There I saw and was attracted by the *Flower Pot*. Besides my return ticket I had in my pocket one-and-sevenpence. The *Flower Pot* looked to me expensive: tea would probably be a shilling (my ideas of prices in those days were based on penury, and a shilling represented two days' dinners), but I resolved to make this an Occasion, and to be for once a spendthrift. I entered the *Flower Pot*, and ordered tea. It was an elegant inn, and I was tasting the unfamiliar and tonic quality of elegance when I heard the waiter making out the bill for the next table; and I was reduced from elegance to spiritual rags. "Three tea, four-and-six, cigarettes, shilling—five-and-six, sir."

Tea, then, was one-and-sixpence. I had one-and-sevenpence. I was at once faced with an appalling problem—appalling, at least, to sixteen. I had entered,

with a consciousness of daring, this elegant place, and now my daring was to be exposed. I was to be shown up as one who did not belong to such places. I had alternative courses, either of which was disgraceful. I could walk out without giving the waiter anything; or I could give him a penny. As I wrestled with the problem, the place began to overwhelm me. The pleasant furniture, the pleasant tea-things, the efficient waiter—I began to feel afraid of all of them. Since those days I have had lots of bothers to overcome, lots of holes to get out of, but profound as many of these were, none of them caused me the mental anguish of this one. I was alone with something that I had never hitherto had to face, and I had no father confessor to resolve my doubts and misery. My mind rolled round and round the problem, in an effort to determine which of the alternatives was the less ghastly sin. I went into that inn at four o'clock. It gave me ten minutes' delight, and two hours and five minutes of misery. Towards the end of my sitting the problem had bound me in a sort of inertia. It had sucked me dry of even the mild resolution necessary to summon the waiter and push my chair back. To make that effort seemed to demand more strength than I possessed. I felt as a man who has been chewing loco feels when he has to walk twenty paces down a passage; he sees before him a journey of five hundred miles. But at last, at 6.15 p.m., I was outside the *Flower Pot*, and I reached Waterloo with one-and-sixpence. How I met my Lady-or-the-Tiger problem I shall not tell. I will only say that the nervous state induced by pondering upon it settled it for me. For years I have been meaning to send them that one-and-sixpence.

I was speaking of the mnemonic power of food in relation to inns. Whenever I see the word "cheesecakes," I think at once of the *George*, at Glastonbury.

I ought to think of it without any such mean aid: it has so many facets to touch and stir the mind. I ought to remember it by its stone hall, its stone staircase, its deep, recessed lounge, its mullioned windows, its Penitents' bench, and the queer snuggeries of its hall that have the appearance of chapels in a cathderal, and may have been so used. I ought to remember it by its benign impassive spirit that, like the Buddha's face, gives nothing, yet has everything for those who seek. But I think of cheese-cakes, because they were on the menu when I first visited it; and they were cheese-cakes. Still, if cheese-cakes serve to remind me of the *George*, they have done extra-cheese-cake service, for it is a good thing to be reminded of the *George*. At first sight, like the river inns, it seems almost too good to be true. It is, one thinks, something out of a troubadour's song or out of the Luttrell Psalter. It does not look like the other old buildings of the town—something that was begun and made. One feels, as with all great work, that it came whole, just like that, and always *was*. It has the frozen flush of immortality rather than the pallor of antiquity; and to have been its guest is to have something for all those moments of trouble, pain, poverty, and despair, when all the things about one have lost their virtue.

Still thinking about food, I recall that delightful and famous Georgian inn at Thame—the *Spread Eagle*. The *Spread Eagle* is controlled by an artist, and it is a place for all people of taste, whether their taste operates in art, in food, in wine, or in life. It has no foolish sporting prints, no steel engravings of Highland cattle standing in ponds, no stags at bay. In their place, it has drawings and paintings by modern artists. It has a dining-room that is just right; so right that I cannot tell you whether it is in the best old style or the best modern style. Its bedrooms have character, and although they have four-

poster beds these are married, and happily, with modern decorative schemes. It has a cellar that is known within a twenty miles radius, and a kitchen that makes every lunch or dinner a succession of charming surprises. And its drawing-room has a library. It would be unique if it had only that library. We all know the usual hotel or inn collection of books. At the worst you have Whittaker's Almanac, the Stock Exchange Year-Book, the Directory of Public Schools, and a few magazines that are presented gratis because those magazines have no sale. At the best, you have cheap fiction and calf-bound sets of Scott and Thackeray. But here you have intelligent periodicals, the books of the more serious publishers, and some private press editions, as well as such trivia as detective stories. Most inn libraries end at 1892; the *Spread Eagle's* is of to-day.

Notable as its library is, this is only an incident in its almost indecent versatility. It has a garden—a garden not at all like other inn gardens. It is the *Spread Eagle's* garden, and it is worth seeing, because the master of the *Spread Eagle*, Mr. John Fothergill (whom I named in the previous chapter as a modern innkeeper), is not only an artist in painting and decoration, and food and wine, but is known to all gardeners and lovers of gardens by his book on horticulture. What else he is, I don't know; but if I learn that he has written an epic, and composed an opera, and designed a new car, and reorganised the sugar-beet industry, I shall register no surprise. The *Spread Eagle* adumbrates all that. If one sees the inn generally as a sound and sensible institution, then among inns the *Spread Eagle* is witty. It is witty in its spirit, in its decorations, and particularly witty in its meals. We all know the regular inn lunch, but whatever you get at the *Spread Eagle*, you won't get that. I can't describe the dishes I have eaten there: I can't even name their constituents; I can only say that

they were new to me, and that I would like to eat them again. Tea, even in our own homes, gives little scope for *esprit*, but the *Spread Eagle* compels it. You order tea, and while you are pouring tea, a dish is slid to the table with a murmur of: "Greek honey." A little later: "Rose-leaf jam." Later: "Apple-cake." Later, something else: "I call these Thame Waffles."

The *Spread Eagle* is a good place to come upon, but since I have told you about it, I fear that you will miss its sharp flavour. To get the full realisation of its quality you should come upon it, as I did, by accident, unprepared. That is the only way to get the best out of inns—to make your own discoveries. Had I been told about that old inn of Durham, the *Three Tuns*, I should have gone there expecting something. I should have found that something, and should have been satisfied; but the experience would have held only half its due charm. As it happened, I knew nothing about it, and so suffered such a sensation as I suffered at five years old when I unexpectedly was offered a new sixpence by a most unpromising uncle. I had just reached my room, when a knock came at the door, and a waiter entered, bearing something on a tray. "Glass of cherry brandy, sir." "It's not for me. I didn't order anything." "No, sir. The manager sends it. Custom of the house, sir."

The *Spread Eagle* is an example of the inn in the full current of modern cultivated life. Too often our newer inns are feeble replicas of their predecessors, trying, in their design and furniture, to be "old-fashioned," and ending in being neither mellow nor modern. Such places exasperate me. What point they think they are making, I don't know: they seem to imagine that there is a sterling style for inns, and that all inns must conform to it; that an inn must have gables and tiny rooms and warming-pans, or it isn't an inn. Which, in

a modern inn, is as sensible as putting cheap wall-paper over the carved panels, and gas-stoves in the inglenooks, of an old inn. Every inn should be of its time. It is correct that the *Feathers* should be snug, and that the *Lygon Arms* should decorate itself with carved oak and settles and diamond windows; but the new inn should carry the stamp of its time. There is no virtue in an old fashion simply as an old fashion; its virtue operates only when it is in harmony with its environment. Removed from that environment it is futile and absurd, and it is ridiculous for an inn of to-day to furnish itself with Jacobean furniture when the furniture of to-day is Heal. The Jacobean inns furnished themselves with the stuff of their day; the Georgian inns furnished themselves with the stuff of *their* day; and if an inn wants to be "old-fashioned" it should follow this good old fashion of furnishing from the material of the times.

Here and there one does find an inn sharing the spirit of the *Spread Eagle*. I recall the *Brimpton Grange*, near Wheatley. The *Brimpton Grange* has no special points and no story. It is in the process of making one, and in the meantime is just an inn. It lives in the best traditions of the inn, but is entirely modern in its application of them. It was originally a private house, and has only lately become an inn. It has made the change very well, and without any nonsense. In their arrangement and furniture the bedrooms are modern. You can walk about in them, and you can dress and undress without knocking your elbows. During breakfast, they are cunningly translated into private sitting-rooms. This is a useful invention, and really does fill a long-felt want, since it affords a deliverance from reading or writing in the public rooms under the irritation of that conspirator's murmur which is neither whisper nor full voice, but a thing of itself, like clergyman's throat and composer's croon—the Hotel-Lounge Gurgle.

At Church Stretton, in Shropshire, I found an equally charming and modern inn. It calls itself simply and expressively *The Hotel*. Its rooms are large, but not too large, and there is light and air. Here again, it is filed in my memory by the card-index of food; it is one of the few country inns I know that seems to understand breakfast. To most inns breakfast means only a pale mess called porridge and eggs-and-bacon. Church Stretton knows better. At the time of my visit I must have been suffering from a surfeit of standardised breakfasts, for, on looking through a stack of old inn bills, I find that I was moved to bring the menu away with me. Here it is—a London hotel menu in a country inn.

Breakfast.

GRAPE FRUIT.
MELON.

CEREALS.

FRIED FILLETS WHITING
GRILLED KIDNEYS.
SAUSAGES.
BACON. HAM. TOMATOES.
OMELETTE.
POACHED AND BOILED EGGS.
COLD HAM. TONGUE PRESSED BEEF.

STEWED APPLES. STEWED PRUNES.

JAM. HONEY. MARMALADE.

Another up-to-date little inn stands where you would least expect to find it—on the edge of Dartmoor. Certainly I didn't expect to find it; I was looking

desperately for the poorest ale-house, and scarcely expecting to find even that. The month was November, and we had been crawling for two hours in an open car through a wet cobweb mist. When at last we saw the lights of a small inn, we made for it. Its exterior gave no hint of its interior comfort, but we were demanding little; we wanted only immediate shelter. We found instead the *Rock*, of Yelverton, with central heating, hot-and-cold water basins in every bedroom, a real bell-service, delightful rooms, and a most excellent dining-room. At that moment, when we were benighted and drenched travellers, I would have given a score of *Ye Olde What-and-Nots* for the suave conveniences of the *Rock*.

At Bettws-y-coed, too, you can find old comfort and modern elegance at the *Royal Oak*. The combination has been most aptly achieved, and neither is sacrificed to the other. The *Royal Oak* is a famous inn, not so much by its inn-qualities—good as these are—but by its sign, the work of David Cox. This is now suitably framed and inset over the fire-place of the hall. So much value is attached to it that it was once the subject of a law-suit that was carried to the House of Lords; the landlady for whom Cox did it claiming it as hers—rightly, most people will think—the owners of the freehold claiming it as a fixture of the house. Of course, the freeholders got it.

I have said that a new inn should be of its time, but I remember that I must make room for an exception. Success, as success always does, compels a raising of the rule. When you go to Tintagel to see the last ruins of King Arthur's stronghold, you will see on the edge of the cliff, right against the Atlantic, a great turreted castle. At first glance, it might be a well-preserved portion of the original, so fitly does it relapse into the landscape. But it isn't. It is the *King Arthur's Castle*

hotel, and it is twentieth century. When you enter its hall, you do not enter the hall of an inn or hotel; there were no inns in the *Morte d'Arthur*. You enter the hall of a castle, and I think if any knight of the Round Table were to enter it he would recognise it as the hall of a castle of his age. A little tidier, perhaps, but otherwise what he was accustomed to see. It was made only a few years ago, but it has been made faithfully, after careful study of the designs and materials of the period. The best modern craftsmen have been at work here, and I give their labours as much respect as I give to the labours of those who work upon modern furniture. Since all art is derivative, this work has as much justification as the work which affects to be new but is merely an adaptation of the art of Babylon and Nineveh. A brilliant reproduction is always to be preferred to a dull original; far more skill goes to its making and quite as much honesty. Many paste stones excel the diamond in the diamond's one quality of brilliance, and the perfect synthetic pearl often excels the perfect real pearl in the delicacy of its lustre. *King Arthur's Castle* makes this achievement over many a genuine old place. It succeeds in its intentions as the Medici Prints succeed in theirs—they are not originals, and they are made with modern colours; but they preserve the quality of the originals.

On my first visit my car approached it behind a party of Americans. They entered before me, and for a minute they made a careful scrutiny of the hall. Then one of them delivered judgment. "Well-well-well-well-well. Say, did Mark Twain ever do anything as naughty as this to King Arthur?" But the American was looking at it through the wrong glasses. It is not naughty. It is an audacious experiment carried out with verve and brio. I applaud it. It is as much worth going to see as the ruins of the original castle.

When our inns were first created their business was not merely to shelter and refresh the traveller, but, in the common acceptance of the word, to entertain him. This entertainment took the form of exhibitions in the yard by tumblers and players, and later of performances by the town minstrels and musicians. When a guest of any importance arrived the musicians waited upon him and gave him sweet music, and the landlord devised some evening entertainment for him, as hotel landlords of to-day devise cabaret shows for their guests. The inn minstrel has now disappeared, but his ghost may sometimes be seen about London. You may see it in the passages of public-houses, holding the door open with its foot, and twanging a banjo, or making the mellifluous flute staccato. The country inn of to-day has no need of him; gramophones and wireless already assault our ears with far more music than we can assimilate, and we look to the country inn—not always successfully—for a little peace.

It still affords us, though, much entertainment if we care to look for it. Old fire-places, beautiful windows, carven doorways, staircases, king-posts, moulded ceilings—indeed, all those interests that you can only otherwise indulge at a museum can be indulged at the old inn. The stuff is there *in situ*. And it can be seen at any time, without any handing over of your stick, or any listening to a dreary curator. The only other places, besides museums, that possess these period beauties and items of interior decoration, are the great private mansions; but it is not always easy, even with letters of introduction, to see these treasures, and it is never possible to see them casually, and at your leisure; you are too sensible of being under obligation. But the treasures of our inns are open to all at the mere cost of a lunch, or even a drink or a cup of coffee.

If fire-places and chimney-pieces are your interest,

then the inn can provide you with a summer's study. For this I can direct you to the *Swan*, at Haslemere; the *White Swan*, at Stratford-on-Avon; the *Green Dragon*, at Alderbury; the *George*, at Crawley; the *King's Arms*, at Christchurch; the *Bull*, at Otford; the *Wrestlers*, at Highgate; the *Luttrell Arms*, at Dunster; the *White Hart*, at Bletchingley; the *Trevelyan Arms*, at Barnstaple; the *Star*, at Alfriston; the *Anchor*, at Ripley; the *George*, at Odiham; the *Bull*, at Sissinghurst; the *Lion*, at Buckden; the *Middle House*, at Mayfield; the *Crown and Treaty*, at Uxbridge; the *George*, at Dorchester (Oxon.); the *Crown*, at Amersham, and the *Lamb*, at Burford.

If it is ironwork, here again you have rich material in the signs. The most notable that I recall are those at the *Swan*, at Knowle; the *Bell*, at Stilton; the *George and Dragon*, at Buntingford; the *Globe*, at Sawtry; the *Rose and Crown*, at Stanton; the *Black Bull*, at Watlington; the *Swan*, at Charing; the *Falstaff*, at Canterbury; the *Red Lion*, at Barnet; the *Cock*, at Hadleigh; the *Angel*, at Woolhampton; the *Bull*, at Redbourn, and, most beautiful of all, the *Swan*, at Market Harborough. The miracle among inn-signs can no longer be seen. This was the sign of the *White Hart*, at Scole, which, stretching across the road, consisted of twenty-five life-size figures of men and animals in black oak. Its cost was over a thousand pounds, and in Sir Thomas Browne's day (Sir Thomas saw it and noted it) that sum meant something. The house is still there and is still worth seeing for its staircases; but at a sale of the house, in the beginning of the nineteenth century, the sign mysteriously disappeared. What became of it is a matter for speculation. Certainly it has never since been seen by any Englishman willing to confess that he had seen it, and even Americans to whom I have shown pictures of it greet the pictures with unaffected surprise.

If your interest lies in ancient windows, there is the *King's Head*, at Aylesbury, which I have mentioned earlier; the *George*, at Salisbury; the *Angel*, at Grantham; the *Reindeer*, at Banbury; and a little stone public-house in Hitchin, called the *Cooper's Arms*. A street-hawker told me that the window looking on to its yard is of great attraction to artists. "Ah—they're always coming down to draw it. And sometimes a man comes down with a party, and he takes the party in the yard, and there they stand while he talks to 'em about it. I suppose it's something in history." It may be; a local tradition says that the house was originally a guild-hall for brickmakers, and later a meeting-house. It goes on to murmur that John Bunyan preached at its meetings.

As one who is interested in everything I can respond to the *Cooper's Arms*, and its possible association with one of the really great Englishmen, and I can respond to the *Bull*, at Sudbury, whose bar-parlour has a fine assortment of Rowlandsons and Gillrays; and to the *Lion*, at Farningham, which also (I speak from memory) has some Gillrays—not, I may add, in the parlour. And I can then turn to the *Talbot*, at Oundle, whose staircase is a staircase that was once part of Fotheringay Castle, and may have been trodden by Mary Stuart. And then I can turn to the *Beverley Arms*, in Yorkshire, for its perfect sixteenth-century kitchen. And then to the Midhurst *Spread Eagle*, for its collection of brass, its bread oven, and its staircase. And then to the *Bull*, at Long Melford, for its woodwork ceiling. And then to the *Flying Horse*, at Nottingham, for the vasty and mysterious caverns which are now its cellars. And then to the *Eagle*, at Cambridge, whose saloon holds a fine collection of coaching material. This is the real stuff—whips, guards' horns, coach-lamps, bits, and traces—all looking, in that particular room, as though

they had been dropped there an hour ago and are waiting for the guards and coachmen to call for them. And then to the *Swan*, at Bradford-on-Avon, for its ancient Dutch tiles, relics of the settlement there of the Dutch weavers. And then to the *Angel*, at Guildford, for its crypt, and its beautiful entrance-hall which, years ago, my elderly uncle tells me, was used as a model for a stage set—the hall in one of the scenes of *Dorothy*. And then to the *Maid's Head*, at Norwich, for its Jacobean bar in the glass-covered yard. And then to the *George*, at Salisbury, for its panelling. And then to the *Middle House*, at Mayfield, for its linen-fold oak dining-room. And then to the *George*, at Stamford, for its eighteenth-century dining-room, whose doors, north and south, are labelled respectively "Edinburgh" and "London." And then to the *Hope Anchor*, at Rye (not the Hope and Anchor, but the Hope Anchor, *i.e.* the spare anchor) an old smuggler's inn, whose bedrooms are named in accordance with the views to be had from their windows: as "Trader's End," "Starland," "Western Watch"; and whose very staircases are named "Shepherd's Way" and "Pilgrim's Way." And then to the *Reindeer*, at Banbury, which once owned a beautifully panelled room and carved ceiling now owned by an American. And then to the *Trip to Jerusalem*, at Nottingham, which is hollowed out of the rock on which the castle stands. It claims to be seven hundred years old, and to have suffered scarcely any alteration. It makes home-brewed ale, and has unusually large cellars; unusually cool, too, since they penetrate beneath Nottingham's rock.

And then there's the *Castle*, at Stevenage, in whose stable, laid across the rafters, is the coffin and remains of an earlier landlord, Henry Trigg, who had a fancy for remaining on his premises. And the *King's Head*, at Stratford, at whose doors the ox is roasted whole for

the Stratford Mop Fair. And the *Fox and Goose*, at Fressingfield, a sixteenth-century gem of timbering, which was once a shire hall, and is described in its deeds as being intended "for the more reverence of God and in avoiding eating and drinking necessary to the profit of the church." (Read it twice, and you will see what the scribe is trying to say.) The parish church is still its owner, and still draws its profits for the upkeep of the church. And there's the *Red Lion*, at Colchester, with its Roman paving, and its ornate oaken front. And the *New Inn* at Gloucester, with its beautiful creeper-covered yard. And the *Star*, at Alfriston, with its sixteenth-century saloon bar, and the queer figure-head at its doors, which not only has no history but has not bred a single anecdote. And the *Beaufort Arms*, at Chepstow, with its late-Georgian music-gallery. And the *Haycock*, at Wansford, which got its name from one of the many accidents that befell "Drunken Barnaby" on his tours.

The authorship of this eccentric work has never been fully settled. It has been attributed to a Barnaby Harrington, but without certainty that Harrington was not a pseudonym. The author is said to have been a graduate at Queen's College, Oxford, but no such name exists in the registers, and nobody knows who "said" it. A manuscript note in my edition (1805, the fifth edition; the first appeared in 1640) attributes it to a man named Braithwaite, born at Appleby; but none of its commentators is able to advance any sure proof to stiffen any conjecture.

There are few inns that Barnaby didn't know: he was apparently as gadabout as Queen Elizabeth or the Pickwickians. But whatever names an inn may claim in its list of visitors, only one, the *Haycock*, mentions his. One can hardly blame them, for he was scarcely the kind of guest that any inn would welcome, let alone

advertise. His behaviour, even in those days, attracted remark, and his comments on the houses he visited, and their hosts and hostesses (particularly hostesses) were frequent and free. An inn seems to regard a compliment, once given, as given in perpetuity; so we can understand their reluctance to advertise Drunken Barnaby's references to the bad treatment he received at some, and to the oncoming disposition of the hostess displayed at others. At Wansford the strong ale of the inn so overcame him that he sank to sleep on the nearest convenient spot—a truss of hay. The river—the Nen—flooded its banks during his sleep, floated the truss of hay, and carried him, still sleeping, many miles down-stream. The sign of the inn is an illustration of the incident.

From Drunken Barnaby I can turn, without too violent a jerk, to the *Swan*, at Fittleworth, where, in the lounge, is a panelled wall decorated by the actual drawings of well-known artists of the near-past. And then to the *Golden Lion*, at Barnstaple, with its wonderful ceiling and candelabra. And the *Green Dragon*, near Chard, with its old church settle. And the *Jolly Farmer*, at Farnham, where the stout William Cobbett was born before it was an inn. And the *Crown*, at Hempstead, where the equally stout Dick Turpin was born. And the *New Inn*, at Romsey, with its old cupboards. And the *Star*, at Yarmouth, with its panelled Nelson room. And, for notable porches and doorways, I recall the *White Horse*, at Ipswich; the *Cock*, at Stony Stratford; the *Flying Horse*, at Nottingham; the *Bear's Head*, at Brereton, and the *Norfolk*, at Arundel.

The queerest of all English inns—and many are as queer as their signs—stands in the middle of England, in Staffordshire. It has no history, no beauty, no curiosities. It is itself a curiosity, and a visit to it is an experience. Its proper title is the *Glynne Arms*, and

you will find it in the middle of a blasted heath at Kingswinford, which is part of the Black Country. But it is never called the *Glynne Arms*: it is the *Crooked House*. It stands over a colliery whose workings stop at one end of its foundations. At this end the house has sunk several feet out of the perpendicular, but without the smallest damage to the house. It is as firm as ever: it has only taken a sharp list and a settlement. The moment you enter its doorway you are seized with sudden vertigo. The effect is that of putting on somebody else's spectacles. You step into a world where gravitation and perspective have gone mad. The grandfather's clock leans at such an angle from the wall that your impulse is to dash forward and catch it before it crashes. Seen against the window, the hanging lamp shocks you by its defiance of nature. Its chains are quite stiff, but it is hanging sideways, as though arrested on the top of a half-circular swing. Wherever you look, you feel that devilry is about. It seems that all the inanimate objects of the rooms once got drunk, and came to life, and that, as punishment, a spell was put upon them that froze them for ever in the middle of one of their staggers. The most disturbing sensation is to be had in the tap-room. If it is your first visit, you will lurch down the passage with every sign of intoxication, and you will crash into the tap-room. On your way to it you will have doubts of your sobriety; what you see in the tap-room will settle those doubts. You will see the other occupants of the room standing in grotesque, angular attitudes, and stressing the sense of devilry by not falling over. And then you will see a long slanting table, the upper end of which is three feet from the floor, and the lower end, two feet. You will see the landlord lay a bottle lengthways on the *lower* end, and you will see the bottle run deliberately *up* the slope, and fall over the top.

After that, the sensible thing to do is to stagger out, and recover yourself in an inn of this world.

My list of memorable inns may be closed by one or two that are not deeply memorable. They have no distinction or eccentricity or great possession; they remain with me merely on their pleasing personality, and as nice places to stop at. I get the same pleasure from writing their names that schoolboys get from writing the names of radiant girls. Here they are:

The *Sands* inn, at Slapton; the *Suffolk*, at Bury St. Edmunds; the *Bell*, at Aylesbury; the inn at St. Mawes (see the churchyard at St. Just-in-Roseland while you're there—as beautiful as its name); the *Wellington*, at Boscastle; the *Crown*, at Amersham; the *Swan*, at Alton; the *King's Arms*, at Ombersley; the *Dolphin*, at Beer; the *Plough*, at Cheltenham; the *Squirrel*, at Wellington; the *Swan*, at Bedford; the *Castle*, at Chiddingstone; the *Wheatsheaf*, at Northleach; the *Lamb*, at Burford (see its Visitors' Book); the *Bush*, at Farnham; the *Nevill Crest*, near Eridge; the *Compasses*, at Gomshall; the *White Horse*, at Haslemere; the *Red Lion*, at Lacock; the *Mason's Arms*, at Branscombe. Oh, and an inn I have not yet visited, but which is on the list for my next tour. Friends of mine wonder how I have missed it. It is the *Shakespeare*, at Stratford, a Tudor house of nine timbered gables—a favourite place of the late C. E. Montague. It is part of the great house of Sir Hugh Clopton, built from the trees of the "Forest of Arden"; and on part of its grounds was built New Place, bought in 1597 by Shakespeare. Its eighteenth-century sign, showing two portraits of Shakespeare, is preserved on one of the landings, and its king-post and cornices bear still the markings that the Tudor carpenters made to indicate their position. It is an inn of long, low rooms, raftered with oak; lovingly fitted, and beautiful to look upon. *And*, my friends tell me, supremely comfortable.

And now, after this anthem of good things, I would like to make, in double-pica type, rubric, a commination of other memorable inns, celebrating the abominable places to stay at—many of them the alleged "best" inn or hotel of their town. These are chiefly main-road inns. They have no interest in pleasing you, for they are not dependent upon goodwill. They don't care whether you visit them again or not, and they act upon the assumption that you won't. It doesn't matter to them, for to-morrow a new string of victims will come buzzing down the road. Their motto is: He will pass this way but once. If, therefore, there is any stale stuff that we can work off upon him, and anything that we can overcharge, let us not fail to do it now; for he will not pass this way—at least he will not stop at our inn—again. These places ought to be "speared," as the good places are "starred," but as I haven't a seven-figure bank balance, the law, always on the side of incompetence and impudence in public service, will not allow me to do you the kindness of spearing them for you. Anyway, as I have said, every tourist knows them, and each can make his own commination.

So let us forget those places, and remember only the noble ones and the nice ones. Perhaps, after all, it is the little ones—the affectionate dogs—that most appeal: those little country places, with a green before them, and a few chestnut trees, and a pond—perhaps even a trout-stream. The little places that promise little, yet reach the peak of achievement possible to little places, and are content to do that without striving after an imperfect imitation of the hotel. The little places where guests get to know each other, and the landlord sits up with the men, and tells them about the four-week cricket-match, when Multum Parva, just over the hill there, beat Petty Magna in the last three minutes by a boundary from old Jack Windlestraw, which lodged in

a crow's nest on the edge of Pagetter's ten-acre field. The little places where, round about half-past seven, the company hangs about the doorway in that gentle restlessness that besets the guests of a good inn about that hour. The dining-room so surprised them yesterday, and the day before, that it has set everybody wondering whether it can possibly maintain a carry-over of surprise. It seems impossible, and yet . . .

And then the gong, or the maid's voice, eases restlessness into decision. Mr. John Gray, from whose *Long Road* I have already quoted, will complete the tale:

In good order laid,
The somewhat stately country board,
Not over prim or pinafored,
Displays what country means afford
Of home-grown and made.

The bell's brazen voice
Is hoarse with clanging: Come and dine;
You know it's useless to repine
For rose—or sunset-coloured—wine,
Or anything that's superfine;
But what is, is choice,

And worth waiting for.
Thus: Soup as Adam ordered it;
A chicken roasted at the spit,
And good as long as there's a bit
To say: Have some more.

The beer (in a glass;
A taper goblet, slim and sleek)
Exactly neither strong nor weak,
Is palatable with the leek
And green sparrow-grass.

The place lighted up
Suggests an hygienic stroll
To soothe the body as a whole,
And just the least revive the soul.
A small parting cup;

Then, scarce needing light,
A pair of walkers, young and wise,
Who reach the rooms called Paradise,
Need no extraneous advice
To *Sleep well; good night.*

In God's Name, Amen.
Nos peccatores benedic
Et dona Tua haec, et sic
perstemus uti decet, hic
Et semper. Amen.

CHAPTER IV

TALES OF WAYSIDE INNS

MUCH as one may deplore the slackness of most inns in the matter of a close and continuous record of their daily lives, it can be understood. They could not foresee that the commonplace goings and comings incidental to their business could have any interest save as material for immediate local gossip. Even those innkeepers who did perceive its interest for a later age probably felt, as we all feel, that diaries take up too much time, and that setting down all daily events, on the chance that the trivial may later be important, is dull work. I doubt if the few of us who are keeping diaries to-day are keeping them in any form that will make them readily useful to future historians. What is of moment to us will be idle to them, and the little matters that we never think of recording, because everybody knows them, will be the very things that they will want.

We have all met, and been exasperated by, those diaries in which the diarist records at length, and with gusto, his meetings with Dr. Jeremiah Wagge, the Big Man of his age, and mentions, merely in passing, that at his house he conversed with Mr. William Jones, Mr. Thomas Sackman, Mr. Jelly, a young man named De Quincey, and a Mr. Lamb, who wrote for the *London Magazine*. I doubt if any current diarists are setting down what clothes they put on in the morning, and in what order they put them on; or describing the fittings of their bathrooms, and how they descend to Tube trains by lifts, and how the lifts work, and what their

offices are like, and what their telephone is like, and what a gallery-queue is, and what a newsboy is, and what they do with their old razor-blades, and what an aerial is; and how they fill each half-hour of a typical day; with a full description of the accessories of that day. Yet all these trifles are matters that the man of four hundred years hence will be curious to know, as we are curious to know the elusive details of the everyday life of an ordinary man under Henry VIII.

Since the inn was so much at the heart of that life, if only one inn on a main road had preserved a close record of the great and small events that touched it, we should have not only a history of that inn, but a small history of England, and an encyclopædia of *ana*. As it is, we have to content ourselves with stray cuttings from one inn and another, and the compilation of the full volume must be left to our imaginations.

The presence of Edward VII. is recorded at many of our existing inns, and in his visits to them he was following our sovereigns before him, save that his visits were pleasure-visits and the visits of the others were in the course of business. The throne of England has been intimately linked with the inn; the personal story of many of its occupants, too. In the lives of Richard III. and Charles I. it recurs at highly critical moments. Richard seems to have made it a more regular court than the palace. At the *Angel*, at Grantham, in 1483, in a room fronting the street, now divided into three, he signed the death-warrant of the Duke of Buckingham. In the courtyard of the *Saracen's Head*, at Salisbury, his headquarters in 1484, Buckingham was executed. In August 1485, Richard lay at the *Blue Boar*, at Leicester, before the engagement at Bosworth Field. Two days later his corpse came back, dangling across a horse, and was thrown into the earth at an unknown spot of a now demolished churchyard.

To Charles the inn was similarly fateful. At Uxbridge still stands the *Crown and Treaty House*, with some excellent contemporary panelling. Here, in 1645, the Commissioners of Charles and Cromwell held a series of meetings in an attempt to call an armistice. Cromwell's men had quarters in houses and inns on the north side of the High Street, and Charles' men in houses and inns on the south side.

> There was a good house at the end of the town (says Clarendon), which was provided for the treaty, where was a fair room in the middle of the house, handsomely dressed for the Commissioners to sit in, a large square table being placed in the middle with seats for the Commissioners, one side being sufficient for those of either party, and a rail for others who should be thought necessary to be present, which went round. . . . Each party eat always together, there being two great inns which served very well for that purpose.

The Treaty house was not then an inn; it was a private residence known as Place House, and did not become an inn until the middle of the eighteenth century. The rooms in which the Commissioners sat are still shown.

While the Commissioners were sitting—it was towards the end of January—another inn came into the story. Certain information was received by Cromwell from one of his spies, stating that a secret letter was being sent from Henrietta Maria to Charles at Oxford. It was being conveyed in the inside of a saddle, and the bearer of it, who knew nothing of the contents of the saddle, would bait at the *Blue Boar* inn, in Holborn, on a certain day of February. Cromwell and Ireton, disguised as troopers, went to the *Blue Boar* on that day,

and engaged two of their men to keep watch for the man described. On his arrival, they declared themselves as ordered to search all passengers, but, as the fellow seemed an honest fellow, they would search only his saddle and holsters. They carried the saddle away, and ripped it up. After some search a letter was discovered sewn inside a thin layer of leather. In it Henrietta Maria advised Charles to offer any terms that would appease the rebels, and thus secure a suspension of hostilities until the arrival of the French forces which her friends in France had promised. When they came, he could make an end and hang the whole crew of his enemies. This letter showed at once that Charles, as usual, was utterly incapable of honesty; and upon reading it Cromwell and Ireton posted immediately to Uxbridge, broke off all negotiations, and set themselves upon his death.

It was at an inn that the end of the struggle came; the inn that had played a part in its beginning. In May of 1646, Charles, seeing that all was lost, arranged with the Scots to deliver himself to them, hoping that they might make better terms for him than he could hope to get for himself. The Scots army was then at Newark, and Charles accordingly approached them at Southwell, a few miles away. He arrived at the *Saracen's Head* (at which he stayed in 1642, when on his way to Nottingham) and invited the Scots Commissioners to dine with him at his inn. They accepted both his hospitality and his surrender; and his last night as King in anything but name was spent in a bedroom which is still a bedroom, and is furnished with a massive oaken four-poster of the kind then in use.

One other inn is associated with his last days. In the summer of 1647, his children, whom he had not seen during the war, were permitted to visit him. The meeting took place at the *Greyhound*, at Maidenhead.

You catch echoes of that futile struggle in many inns; not only those inns near the known battle-fields, but at inns whose neighbourhood knew no regular battle. You may come into close contact with it at an inn where, a day or two ago, while engaged on this book, I had tea. At Chagford, on Dartmoor, is an old stone inn, the *Three Crowns*, dating from the time of Henry VIII. It has a stone porch, and, within the porch, two stone seats in one piece with the walls. In a minor engagement on Dartmoor the handsome, brilliant, and young Sidney Godolphin was mortally wounded. He was carried to the *Three Crowns*, set upon one of those stone seats, and there, within a few minutes of receiving his wound, bled to death.

The flight of Charles II. after Worcester has linked him necessarily with inns, and mostly as danger-points. He travelled as Will Jackson, servant to Colonel Phelips, who was manœuvring his escape. A chemist's shop at Bridport was once the *George* inn of that town, and it was here that Charles, despite his disguise, was recognised by an ostler, and had to fly. At the *Talbot*, at Mere, he was luckier. You may read on its walls how Will Jackson was standing in the yard, while his master was within, when the landlord brought out a drink with: "Thou look'st an honest fellow. Let's drink a health to the King!" At a house in Charmouth, which was once the *Queen* inn, the proverbial luck of horse-shoes almost went astray. Charles was again recognised. His horse had cast a shoe, and the village blacksmith, who had been summoned to the inn—a man who would have delighted Dr. Watson—noted that the horse's three shoes bore the distinguishing marks of three different counties, one of them being Worcester. An alarm was raised, but not until Charles had had sufficient warning to get clear away.

His last resting-place, during his flight out of Eng-

land, was an inn at Brighton—the *George*, later renamed, in his honour, the *King's Head*. It stood, and an inn of that name still stands, in West Street. In Charles' time what is now West Street was on the sea-front, and the inn was the resort of fishermen and smugglers—just the place where a king, whatever the cause of his flight, might find well-wishers. It was selected in certainty of that, for its landlord was a personal friend of Captain Tettersell, the owner of the boat that carried Charles to France. For many years, indeed, until the original inn was demolished, it was the custom, on Restoration Day, to decorate the front of the house with boughs of oak. Although the inn itself has gone, the yard, and the original oak-beamed stables and quarters for post-boys, remain.

Monmouth was not so fortunate in his flight or in his friends. At the Norton St. Philip *George*, as mentioned earlier, he narrowly missed the battle of Sedgemoor on the morning of that battle because a wandering sniper, over-anxious for the reward that lay on Monmouth's head, narrowly missed his aim as Monmouth was dressing at the window. A few days later, near the *Woodyates Inn*, on the borders of Wiltshire and Dorset, a horseless, unkempt, half-starved, broken-spirited tramp was dragged out of a ditch, and the Monmouth Rebellion was over.

A somewhat lighter memory of royalty, though with its melancholy side, belongs to the *Crown*, at Rochester. It was there that Henry VIII. took a private peep at the new wife that had been found for him—Anne of Cleves, the "mare of Flanders"—and at the sight made a scene to his retinue that fully justified his sobriquet of Bluff.

Of these occasions no illuminating details have come down to us. We know them only as statements. To the people of the inns they were doubtless events whose portent they could not perceive, and whose immediate

interest quickly waned when the next event came along. But if the only true diarist had been present, he who did not consider what was or what was not important, but set it all down, we should know every circumstance—how those people stood, what gestures they made, what words they spoke, what expressions their faces held; and should have all the little glancing rays that light a fact into a living moment. But it is most likely that in their manner they were casual. Great events seldom dress and dramatise themselves: we are much more expressive over an underdone bird or a corked bottle than over a matter that is to influence the whole course of our lives. The first Labour Government took charge of England as casually as Henrietta Maria sat down to write her disastrous letter. The end of the Great War was not at all as "romantic" as the romantically-minded would have had it. Some men got out of an escorted car. They said to those who received them: "We are officers of the German Staff come to demand an armistice." They were conducted to Marshal Foch, and that was that.

Of all our inns none, I think, has had closer relations with royalty than the *Anchor*, at Liphook. This, perhaps, is because it stands at a significant point on the main road to Portsmouth and to contact with the British navy. It claims Edward II. as visitor to an inn standing on this site, and later the gadabout Elizabeth. But after that the record is authenticated. Charles II. certainly visited a house of this name at this spot; Samuel Pepys, too. The present house is known to have received Queen Anne, and after her George III. and his Queen, William IV., the then Queen of Spain, the then Queen of Portugal, the Duchess of Kent and Princess Victoria. Nelson was a frequent guest, and in 1815 the Allied Sovereigns met here, with Blücher and Wellington. And to salt this collection of royalties and militaries, there was another frequent guest—John Wilkes.

The *Lion*, at Hampton-on-Thames, also has a distinguished record of visitors. An earlier inn under that name afforded lodging to the men engaged in the building of Hampton Court, and in later days the rebuilt house was frequented by Dryden, Pope, Swift, Colley Cibber, and Addison.

Although the majority of our inns were built as inns, and have enjoyed an unbroken life, there are many that were originally built for other purposes, and some that suffered, in the railway era, an interim; while others suffered complete extinction. The beautiful *Bear and Billet*, at Chester, for example, was once the "town house" of the Earls of Shrewsbury. When communication with London became easier, and Chester ceased to be "town," it was leased to an innkeeper, but with the provision that rooms should be perpetually reserved for the family. The *Old House at Home*, at Havant, opposite the church, was originally the vicarage of that village, and the *Pounds Bridge* inn, near Penshurst, was built as a rectory. Marlborough College, before it was a school for the sons of the clergy, was the most famous inn on the Bath Road—the *Castle Inn*—and before that it was the residence, in the mid-eighteenth century, of Lady Hertford. Here she entertained the poets and wits of the time, and here, in the childish romanticism of that period, she strutted about the grounds in the guise of a Watteau shepherdess. When it passed, about 1750, to the Duke of Northumberland, it was turned into an inn, and from then, until 1842, it was visited by "everybody," since it was the natural midway halt to and from the Bath. One of its many stories is of Lord Chatham, who, suffering from a venomous manifestation of his gout, decided to rest there some days. To impress upon the village of Marlborough a due sense of his condescension, he ordered that every room of the inn should be at his disposal and every member of the staff was to

be dressed in his livery. The finest minds of the film-world could scarcely improve upon that piece of publicity.

The *Haycock*, at Wansford, after enjoying a long life as an inn, gave up that business in the 'eighties of last century, and became the hunting-lodge of some local people. Having served that purpose for forty years, it reverted in 1929 to its former business, and is once again an inn. A similar story belongs to the famous *Bell*, of Barnby Moor, which, after a hundred years of life under that sign, was sold in the 'forties of last century as a private residence. Having had a comfortable sleep of sixty years, it awoke to the first motor-horn, and is again the *Bell*.

The *Peacock*, at Rowlsey, dating from 1652, was built as a manor-house, and looks like it. It did not open its doors as an inn until the beginning of the nineteenth century. The *Dolphin*, at Potter Heigham, was, in the seventeenth century, the home of Bishop Hall until his death; and *Winterslow Hut*, on the Exeter road, before it was an inn, was the solitary home of that brilliant solitary, William Hazlitt. The *Blue Boar*, at Maldon, was originally the home of the De Vere family, and that beautiful Renaissance building, the *Duke's Head*, of King's Lynn, was built as the town-house of a wine-merchant of Lynn, Sir John Turner. The *Radnorshire Arms*, at Presteign, a stately black-and-white mansion, has a faint contact with Charles I. It was the home of the John Bradshaw who signed the royal death-warrant.

The *Gloucester Arms*, at Penrith, parts of which date from the fifteenth century, began as the Hall of the lords of the manor (Richard III. was a guest), and the *Two Lions* of the same town was the town-house of some local landed gentry.

Scores of once-distinguished inns are now undis-

tinguished farm-houses, and some are even shops and offices. A farm-house at Dunchurch was once, under the sign of the *Lion*, a famous halting-place on the Holyhead road. It has an interesting contact with English history, since it was the meeting-place of the Gunpowder Plot conspirators. In its rooms, Catesby (the local squire), the Wrights, Percy, Rookwood, and Winter met, under pretence of planning a hunting party, to plan and discuss that rising of the Catholics which was to follow the destruction of the Parliament House. And in its rooms, on the evening of November the 5th, Sir Everard Digby awaited the coming of Catesby with the news of the act accomplished. Late in the evening Rookwood, Catesby, and Percy arrived at the *Lion*, and met Sir Everard with the news that led to their immediate dispersal and to fireworks and bonfires every year since.

There is a shop in Thame, with a yard alongside, which deserves a little more attention than small shops usually receive. It was once an inn, and its sign was the *Greyhound*. In the yard of the *Greyhound* died John Hampden, on the day of Chalgrove Field. At Taunton is a grocer's shop, which was once the *White Hart*. From its windows Jeffreys watched the batches of executions that he had ordered. Another extinguished inn has interest for the literary, and should have interest for all innkeepers. At Cold Norton, in Oxfordshire (a well-named spot), is a small private building which, when I last saw it, was letting apartments. This building is all that is left of the once-great *Chapel House Inn*, one of the monastic survivals. It was round a fire of the *Chapel House Inn*, when they were on their way to Lichfield, that Johnson delivered to Boswell those sentiments about inns that are known to all who have ever relished an inn.

Numbers of other inns have personal associations with literature; some of them so close that to many

people they are literary shrines. There is the *Burford Bridge* inn, already mentioned, where Keats wrote a good part of *Endymion*. There is the *Rose and Crown*, at Halifax, where Defoe wrote part of *Robinson Crusoe*. There is the *Royal*, at Bideford, once the mansion of a country merchant, where Kingsley wrote *Westward Ho!* There is the *Swan*, at Stafford, where George Borrow worked as a sort of reception-clerk—at least, he says he did; and he told so many traveller's tales that it is quite likely he fell into the truth now and then. There is the *Winterslow Hut*, just named, where Hazlitt wrote most of the essays published under the comprehending title of *Winterslow*. There is the *White Hart*, at Whitchurch, where Newman, having ten hours to wait for the Plymouth coach, began his *Lyra Apostolica*. And there is the *Rose and Crown*, at Saffron Walden, which holds a tale of the greatest literary interest. The tale is the result of the researches of Mr. Edmund Dring, and it concerns nothing less than the identity of Shakespeare's Mr. W. H. Shakespeare is known to have visited Saffron Walden, with his company of players, and Mr. Dring, who acquired possession of a manuscript book belonging to William Holgate, son of the then landlord of the *Rose and Crown*, and himself a minor poet, is satisfied, on the evidence of this book, that the W. H. of the sonnets was this son of an innkeeper.

And lastly there is the *Lion*, at Shrewsbury, to which we are indebted for one of the finest bravura passages in that fine bravura work, *The Opium Eater*. The *Lion* marked the jumping-off place from which the seventeen-year-old De Quincey was to make his foolish plunge into London and misery. He had decided, while on a walking-tour in Wales, to make this plunge, and he walked into Shrewsbury, from Oswestry, to pick up the London mail. The *Lion*, at that time, was re-decorating its bedrooms, and as those that had been

treated were already occupied, De Quincey was "accommodated" in the ball-room. This room, an Adam room, in which Paganini once played, is still used as a ball-room, and can be seen to-day as De Quincey saw it. As the *Confessions* is a book which we all read in our youth, and seldom look at later, here is the rhapsody which the ball-room inspired:

> It might be 7 p.m. when first I entered upon my kingdom. About three hours later I rose from my chair, and with considerable interest looked out into the night. For nearly two hours I had heard fierce winds arising; and the whole atmosphere had, by this time, become one vast laboratory of hostile movements in all directions. Such a chaos, such a distracting wilderness of dim sights, and of those awful "sounds that live in darkness" (Wordsworth's "Excursion"), never had I consciously witnessed. Rightly, and by a true instinct, had I made my farewell adieus to summer. All through the day, Wales and her grand mountain ranges—Penmaenmawr, Snowdon, Cader Idris—had divided my thoughts with London. But now rose London—sole, dark, infinite—brooding over the whole capacities of my heart. Other object, other thought, I could not admit. Long before midnight the whole household (with the exception of a solitary waiter) had retired to rest. Two hours, at least, were left to me, after twelve o'clock had struck, for heart-shaking reflections. More than ever I stood upon the brink of a precipice; and the local circumstances around me deepened and intensified these reflections, impressed upon them solemnity and terror, sometimes even horror. It is all but inconceivable to men of unyielding and callous sensibilities how profoundly others find their reveries modified and overruled by the external characters of

the immediate scene about them. Many a suicide that hung dubiously in the balances has been ratified, and carried into summary effect, through the forlorn, soul-revolting aspect of a crazy, dilapidated home. Oftentimes, without extravagance, the whole difference between a mind that spurns life and the same mind reconciled to life turns upon the outside features of that particular domestic scenery which hourly besieges the eyes. I, in this Shrewsbury hotel, naturally contemplated a group of objects tending to far different results. And yet in some respects they agreed.

The unusual dimensions of the rooms, especially their towering height, brought up continually and obstinately, through natural links of associated feelings or images, the mighty vision of London waiting for me afar off. An altitude of nineteen or twenty feet showed itself unavoidably upon an exaggerated scale in some of the smaller side-rooms, meant probably for cards or for refreshments. This single feature of the rooms—their unusual altitude, and the echoing hollowness which had become the exponent of that altitude—this one terrific feature (for terrific it was in the effect), together with crowding and evanescent images of the flying feet that so often had spread gladness through these halls on the wings of youth and hope at seasons when every room rang with music: all this, rising in tumultuous vision, whilst the dead hours of night were stealing along —all around me, household and town, sleeping— and whilst against the windows more and more the storm outside was raving, and to all appearance endlessly growing—threw me into the deadliest condition of nervous emotion under contradictory forces, high over which predominated horror recoiling from that unfathomed abyss in London into

which I was now so wilfully precipitating myself. Often I looked out and examined the night. Wild it was beyond all description, and dark as "the inside of a wolf's throat." But at intervals when the wind, shifting continually, swept in such a direction as to clear away the vast curtain of vapour, the stars shone out, though with a light unusually dim and distant. Still, as I turned inwards to the echoing chambers, or outwards to the wild, wild night, I saw London expanding her visionary gates to receive me, like some dreadful mouth of Acheron (*Acherontis avari*). Thou also, Whispering Gallery! once again in those moments of conscious and wilful desolation didst to my ear utter monitorial sighs. For once again I was preparing to utter an irrevocable word, to enter upon one of those fatally tortuous paths of which the windings can never be unlinked.

Such thoughts, and visions without number corresponding to them, were moving across the *camera obscura* of my fermenting fancy, when suddenly I heard the sound of wheels; which, however, soon died off into some remote quarter. I guessed at the truth—viz., that it was the Holyhead Mail wheeling off on its primary duty of delivering its bags at the post office. In a few minutes it was announced as having changed horses; and I was off to London.

For art, there is the *Bear*, at Devizes, and Fanny Burney's story about it. Fanny and Mrs. Thrale were on their way to Bath, and stopped the third night at the *Bear*. While passing the evening at cards they were surprised by the sound of a pianoforte. Fanny, ever inquisitive, went to discover the source of the performance, and discovered two graceful girls of thirteen and sixteen—daughters of the house. She also discovered

that the house was heavily furnished with books, paintings, and drawings, as well as music. The diary continues:

> But though these pretty girls struck us so much, the wonder of the family was yet to be produced. This was their brother, a most lovely boy of ten years of age, who seems to be not merely the wonder of their family, but of the times, for his astonishing skill in drawing. We found that he had been taken to town, and that all the painters had been very kind to him, and Sir Joshua Reynolds had pronounced him, the mother said, the most promising genius he had ever met with.

The boy's name was Thomas. The innkeeper's name was Lawrence.

Not far from Devizes is Hungerford, which also has a *Bear* inn. At this inn William of Orange met the commissioners of James II. in 1688, and there made his final decision on the situation. Earlier in the same year another inn had played a part in this business. This was the *Cock and Pymat*, at Whittington, in Derbyshire, now a private house. At this inn gathered the Earl of Devonshire, the Earl of Danby, and Mr. Thomas D'Arcy, to formulate and pass a Resolution, calling upon James to restore the freedom of Parliament, and if not. . . . James ignored both the request and the threat; hence the presence of William of Orange at the *Bear*.

But the best of all inn stories, I think, are the stories of roguery and devilry. The inn is the right place for the telling of tales in a chimney-corner, and it is almost a tradition that the right tales for chimney-corners are those that raise the hair and curdle the blood. Our inns can supply many of these: some of them pure fact,

others, fact dressed with the poetic realism of fancy. It is natural that such an institution should have its taint of crime: by its public-privacy it lends itself most aptly to the purposes of the rogue. Host and guest, if so disposed, have each other at their mercy. Its suitability to this business was perceived and vigorously exploited from its very beginnings, and there is scarcely any offence in the calendar, from murder to smuggling and over-charging, whose performance its walls have not seen. Even to-day the modern hotel is the playground of the criminal, though the colour of his crime seldom rises above the pallor of theft from bedrooms or bilking the management. But in the past the roguery of host and guest was of scarlet and purple.

Many a landlord was in league with highwaymen, not only passing to them information of the route to be taken by rich travellers, but also concealing them when search was being made for them. (You may still see in some old inns the "highwaymen's hole" over the kitchen fire-place or under the stairs). John Clavel, a reformed highwayman of the Stuart age, published in 1628 a penitent outpouring, in which he gave away some of the tricks of the trade:

Oft in your clothier's and your glazier's inn,
You shall have chamberlains that there have been
Placed purposely by thieves, or else consenting
By their large bribes, and by their often tempting,
That mark your purses drawn and give a guess
What's there, within a little, more or less.
Then will they grip your cloak-bags, feel their weight.
There's likewise in mine host sometimes deceit:
If it be left in charge with him all night,
Unto his roaring guests he gives a light,
Who spend full thrice as much in wine and beer
As you in those and all your other cheer.

And William Harrison, in his Description of Britain, gives similar caution:

> When he cometh into the inn, and alighteth from his horse, the ostler forthwith is very busy to take down his budget or capcase in the yard from his saddle-bow, which he passeth slyly in the hand to feel the weight thereof; or if he miss of this pitch, when the guest hath taken up his chamber, the chamberlain that looketh to the making of the beds will be sure to remove it from the place where the owner hath set it, as if it were to set it more comveniently somewhere else, whereby he getteth an inkling whether it be money or other short wares; and thereof giveth warning to such old guests as haunt the house and are of his confederacy. Some think it a gay matter to commit their budgets at their coming to the goodman of the house; but thereby they betray themselves. For albeit that money be safe for the time that it is in his hands, there cannot be a surer token unto such as pry and watch for those booties than to see any guest deliver his capcase in such manner.

Travellers' cheques may not be romantic, but they do preserve one's cash, and if the modern landlord is less plumed than his ancestors he makes up for it in other ways. At least, he allows us an easy night's sleep, and if the lover of romance thereby misses all that roguery that he takes for romance, he can create his own romance. He can still be a bilker.

The most scarlet of all inn tales is set around that delightful, half-timbered inn at Colnbrook, known today as the *Ostrich*, but known in the time of Henry I. as the *Crane*. The story is told by the first English novelist, Thomas Deloney, in his romance, *Thomas of Reading*. Thomas of Reading, coming frequently to

London, used the *Crane* as his first and last halting-place, and was on friendly terms with its host and hostess, of whose true character he knew nothing. He usually carried large sums of money, which he passed to the host for safe-keeping, feeling confident that he was among not only strict business people but good friends. This proved his undoing, as it had proved the undoing of many another guest; for the host and hostess were covetous people to whom the prospect of easy money was irresistible. They had devised a simple means of securing this easy money. The guest who had delivered the money was given a room over the kitchen—a cunning room in which the feet of the bedstead were made fast to the floor, and the bedding sewn to the sides of the bedstead. The bed stood upon a portion of the floor which, by the removal of two bolts in the kitchen ceiling, was made to drop into the kitchen like a drawbridge. Directly under this was a great cauldron in which they fomented their brew; and (says Deloney) "in the dead time of night, when the victim was sound asleep, they plucked out the bolts, and down would the man fall out of his bed into the boiling cauldron, and all the cloaths that were upon him, where, being suddenly scalded and drowned, he was never able to cry or speak one word." Then they would go to the bedroom, and remove all clothes and other traces of the guest, and burn them, and set the bed back as before. If, in the morning, other guests who had talked with the murdered guest, wondered at not seeing him, the host would say that he rose early and took horse before dawn. To cover this story, the host, during the night, would remove the man's horse from the stable, and carry it to a stable of his own a mile away, and there keep it for some days until he could in some way dismark it, as by making a straight tail curly, or by cropping the ears, and so on.

On two occasions they had prepared to make an end of Thomas, and secure his gold for themselves, but on each occasion something had happened to disturb their plans. No matter, said the host; third time pays for all. And it did. And it seemed that Thomas, this third time, was faintly aware of peril, for, on his way to the inn, a great heaviness came upon him, and his nose began to bleed.

Well, to his Inn he came, and so heavy was his heart, he could eat no meat. His host and hostess, hearing he was so melancholy, came up to chear him, saying, Jesus, Master Cole, what ails you to-night? Never did we see you thus sad before. Will it please you to have a quart of burnt sack?

With a good will (quoth he) and would to God Tom Dove were here, he would surely make me merry, and we should lack no musick; but I am sorry for the man with all my heart, that he is come so far behind-hand. Let me see, I have but one child in the world and that is my daughter, and half that I have is hers, the other half my wife's. In conscience, my wealth is too much for a couple to possess, and what is our religion without charity? And to whom is charity more to be shown, than to decayed householders? Good, my host, lend me a pen and ink, and some paper, for I will write a letter unto the poor man straight, and something I will give him. That alms which a man bestows with his own hands, he shall be sure to have delivered, and God knows how long I shall live.

With that, his hostess, dissembling, answered: Doubt not, Master Cole, you are like enough by the course of nature to live many years.

God knows (quoth he) I never found my heart so heavy before.

And so sitting down sadly, upon a sudden he burst forth weeping; they demanded the cause thereof, he spake as followeth:

No cause of these fears I know; but it comes now into my mind when I set towards this my last journey, how my daughter took on, and I could not be rid of the little baggage a long time, she did so hang about me, crying out most mainly O, my father, I shall never see him again.

Then they asked him if he would go to bed.

No (said he), although I am heavy, I have no mind to go to bed.

With that certain of the musicians of the town came to the chamber, and knowing that Master Cole was there drew out their instruments and very solemnly began to play.

But Master Thomas could not endure their music, and begged them to have done. After sitting some time longer in this melancholy mood, he called for another cup and began to make ready for bed, and at last retired. When he had gone an argument began in the kitchen, wherein the hostess played a low-life Lady Macbeth. The host was of opinion that they should leave him alone: he seemed to have the evil spirit on him. But the hostess would not hear it.

What man, faint you now? Have you done so many, and do you shrink at this? Then, showing him a great deal of gold that Cole had left with her, she said, Would it not grieve a body's heart to lose this? Hang the old churl, what should he do living any longer? He hath too much, and we have too little. Tut, husband, let the thing be done, and then this is our own.

Her wicked counsel was followed, and when they

had listened at his chamber door, they heard the man sound asleep. All is safe, quoth they, and down into the kitchen they go, their servants being all in bed, and pulling out the iron pins, down fell the bed, and the man dropt out into the boiling cauldron.

But this was their last cut. When the landlord went to the stable to remove the victim's horse, he found the door open, and the horse gone. The horse was found later on the highway in the company of a mare belonging to a neighbouring farmer. Meantime, as Cole did not return to Reading, his wife sent messengers up the road enquiring for him. The landlord of the *Crane*, at which they enquired, told the usual story that he had taken horse on such a day, but as the servant pursued enquiries he heard of a horse being found astray on the highway, and on going to see the horse recognised it as his master's. He thereupon took the horse back to the *Crane*, when the landlord, seeing him approach with the horse, laid information against himself, as criminals so often do, by bolting. On the servant's reporting this to the justices, they issued a warrant, and, while search was being made for the host, secured the hostess. After a short examination she made a full confession, and the host being taken shortly afterwards in Windsor Forest, both were hanged. Before execution they admitted, or claimed, that they had disposed of sixty guests in this manner. A touch of pride must be granted here, since, even in those days, sixty missing travellers from one short highway could scarcely have failed to bring suspicion and a close examination upon the inns of that highway. One or two might be credible, but sixty. . . . One could scarcely get away with sixty even in the great hotels of London, where guests could disappear without arousing the least remark among the other three hundred.

That landlords did finish one or two is proved by the Newgate records. There is the case of Mr. Kidderminster, a guest at the *White Horse*, at Chelmsford. Mr. Kidderminster, having realised his estate, a matter of about six hundred pounds, left Cambridgeshire for London, and reached Chelmsford on an April night of 1654. He was never seen again. His wife, who was awaiting him in London, made long and searching enquiries, but with no result other than the customary result of enquiries after missing people. That is, observant people had seen him in Amsterdam, in Cork, and even in Barbadoes, and many other places where he was not. Not until nine years later did she learn the truth. Her sister, reading the news-sheet, discovered an item stating that the bones of an unknown person, supposed to be robbed and murdered, had been found buried in a back-yard of Chelmsford. Upon this news the devoted wife set out for Chelmsford, and, having no means of travelling otherwise, went on foot. Overcome by fatigue, she put up for the night at the *Black Bull*, at Romford, and here, by one of those coincidences that work for the law, she got into conversation with another woman-guest, and casually spoke of hoping to reach Chelmsford next day. Asking if the guest knew Chelmsford, she learned that the woman was born there. Asking if the woman knew the *White Horse*, she was told Yes. The woman went on to say that it was now kept by a Mr. Turner, a very good sort of man, but that his predecesor, a man named Sewell, should have been hanged long ago, for it was certain that he had made away with at least one visitor. Further talk brought out the fact that the former ostler of the Chelmsford house was now living right at hand in Romford.

Upon this the wife sent a message to the man, asking him to call and see her, but the messenger had

overheard the talk between the two women, and passed it to the ostler who, very naturally, refused to come.

Next morning she pursued her journey, and on reaching Chelmsford went at once to the *White Horse*. There she was referred to the wife of the former landlord, Mr. Sewell, who now kept the *Shears*. From Mrs. Sewell she got no satisfaction, but in the town she learnt that on the discovery of the bones, warrants had been issued against the Sewells, and they were bailed to appear at the Assizes. Before the Assizes came on, Sewell died, under strong suspicion of having been poisoned by his wife. This, it was believed, was to shut his mouth, since he had many times spoken of desiring to clear his mind of something. As no proof of a missing person could be brought forward at the Assizes Mrs. Sewell was remanded on bail, and the notice that the wife of the murdered man had read was ordered to be inserted in the newspapers.

The wife now returned to Romford, and went directly to the ostler. She gave a description of her husband, and he readily answered that he had seen such a man at the *White Horse*, at Chelmsford, some years ago; but when she pressed him with questions he became suddenly confused, and told her that a chambermaid named Kendall, who had been at the *White Horse* at the time, could give her all the information she wanted. On her reporting this at Chelmsford, a warrant was issued for the ostler, Moses Drayne, and for the chambermaid, Mary Kendall; and then the story came out.

Mary Kendall stated that on the critical day she was ordered to prepare a bed in the room called King's. In the room she found a gentleman whom she described. This gentleman, in her presence, delivered to her master and mistress a cloak-bag, stating that it contained nearly six hundred pounds. At night her mistress ordered her to sleep in her daughters' room, at the

farther end of the house, instead of in her usual room. On retiring to bed she was locked in. The daughters did not sleep in the room that night. Between one and two in the morning she was awakened by a great noise of something that shook the house. In the morning her mistress unlocked the door of her bedroom, and when she got down she found the master, the mistress and the ostler sitting fully clothed and drinking. She asked if last night's visitor had gone, and was told he had. She asked if he had left her anything, and was told a groat. She was about to go upstairs to set the visitor's bedroom in order, when she was stopped and told that it was already done. For eight weeks the room was kept locked, and when the maid asked why it was kept locked, she was told that they had few guests fit for the best room in the house. Then the landlord, possibly in a fit of bad memory, sent her to his bedroom to get his cloak, and there she saw the guest's clothes and cloak-bag. A little later, her mistress, also, it seems, forgetful, sent her to the locked room to get something. Being suspicious all along of this locked room, she made a careful search, and there found the guest's hat, his sword, and his boots. She took them downstairs to show to her mistress, and met the ostler. She challenged the story of the guest's departure, and asked what clothes he could have gone in. A quarrel ensued between her and the ostler, and the mistress came in and beat her. In the quarrel and the struggle a number of things were said which convinced her that the guest had been murdered. She added, in her evidence, that after the guest's visit to the inn her master, who was so poor that he was often in arrears with rent and payment for beer, was suddenly in easy circumstances, and that the daughters began to dress more handsomely. Also that Moses Drayne, the ostler, whom she knew to have no means but his wages, soon afterwards lent sixty pounds to a friend, and that

she saw in his possession the guest's clothes which he had had dyed a different colour.

Neighbours were called who proved that during the night they heard cries of "Murder!" coming from the inn, and a great deal of noise, as of heavy things being thrown about in a struggle; and then darkness and silence.

On this evidence Moses Drayne was found guilty of participating in the murder, and was hanged at Brentwood.

His case was a reversal of the case of the murder at the Oxford inn. Moses Drayne was hanged, and his landlord died in his bed. In the Oxford case, the landlord was hanged, and the real murderer, a servant, died in his bed.

Jonathan Bradford kept an inn at Oxford. To this inn came one night a Mr Hayes and his servant. With them came a considerable sum of money. The landlord was tempted by the money, and determined to make an end of his guest. When all was quiet, he crept upstairs to the guest's room, bearing a lantern and a knife. He was hanged on the evidence of two other guests.

During the night they were disturbed by a noise in the next room, and, on listening closely, they heard deep groans, as of a dying man. Both of them rose and went instantly to the room to discover the trouble, and, if possible, render assistance. In the room they found Jonathan Bradford, lantern and knife in hand, stooping over his bleeding victim. The victim died without speaking in the very moment of their entering. Jonathan frantically protested his innocence, but the evidence against him was so strong that the protests were not even listened to; and he was duly hanged. Not until the guest's servant lay on his death-bed was it disclosed that Jonathan's protests were genuine. In the hour of death the servant confessed that he, too, had coveted

his master's money, and had thought that an inn, which was accessible to all sorts of men, was the most likely place in which to secure it and do away with his master. He had done it, and had secured the money, about one minute before the landlord arrived to do it.

From all the cases of inn-murder that I know, it appears that one factor against success was, as here, the servant problem. In most of them discovery was made, either by the servant's eavesdropping and subsequent evidence for the Crown, or, where the servant was an accessory, by some stupid misbehaviour. Mr. James Batson, a semi-reformed highwayman turned innkeeper, was given away by his ostler-accomplice, and Mr. and Mrs. Van Berghen, East End innkeepers, were condemned by their servant-maid.

The Van Berghens kept an inn at East Smithfield, and there they did away with a country visitor named Norris. Mr. Norris, like many country visitors, being away from home, laid aside his prudence and took too much wine at the Van Berghens' house. He was lodging at the *Black Bull*, at Aldgate, and, finding himself overcome, he asked the maid to get him a coach. The landlady stopped the maid on the way and ordered her to pretend to find one but to say that she could not. This she did; whereupon Norris decided that he would do his best to walk to the *Black Bull*. On the way he made the discovery that he had been robbed of his purse, and turned back to challenge the inn with having stolen it. And so met his death.

The Van Berghens strongly denied his charge, and ordered him to go. He might have saved his life by going, but he obstinately refused, and forced his way into a private room. Here the ostler, one named Dromelius, came to him and threatened him in a way that led to a sort of skirmish. Upon this Van Berghen picked up a poker and broke in his skull, Dromelius

stabbed him in different parts of the body, and Mrs. Van Berghen stood by and encouraged them. When he was dead, they stripped him, and Van Berghen and Dromelius carried the body out and threw it in the Thames, while Mrs. Van Berghen scrubbed the floor. Dromelius then packed the clothes in a hamper and took boat across the river to a lodging where he proposed to stay until he could make a sailing, with his share of the money, to Holland. But next morning the body was found on the foreshore; and on enquiries being made around the district, neighbours remembered seeing Van Berghen and Dromelius returning from the spot where the body was found. The inn was promptly searched, and what with a small spot of blood being found behind the door of a room that had been well scrubbed, and the evidence of the maid, who had seen a good deal of the business, the Van Berghens were arrested. Then a waterman came forward with news of having carried a man and a hamper across the river, and Dromelius was arrested. The three, being aliens, were tried by a jury of six Englishmen and six foreigners. They were found guilty and hanged near their inn.

The case of James Batson is somewhat pathetic, for, rogue that he had been, he had reformed his ways, and when temptation came upon him, he was living respectably and profitably as an innkeeper. As he says himself, "finding the gout come upon me, I took a public-house, and, understanding several languages, I now have a very good custom from foreigners. I intend to leave off my foolish pranks." But good resolutions need stability of character. As an innkeeper, Batson made more money than he had ever made by roguery, but, having tasted the satisfaction of amassing money, he began to be eager to increase it.

When, then, a rich traveller arrived at his inn, the temptation was too strong for him. The ostler noted

the weight of the guest's bags and reported the matter to Batson with the idea that they might devise some means of coming by it. After some debate they decided that murder was the only way, and that night the ostler casually cut the sleeping man's throat, and he and Batson stowed the body in a cupboard. But then arose the question of dividing the money, and, as the ostler claimed the larger share for his larger share of work, there was a quarrel. It ended by the ostler making off with the bulk of the money, and, later, getting drunk on some of it. Under a strong sense of the injustice of his master in this matter of division, he began to babble of the quarrel, and then of the cause of it. At first his story was treated as a drunkard's ramblings, but when he went on to say that he would be revenged on Batson by turning King's evidence, a constable was summoned. As he stood by his story, the house was searched, and the body discovered. Both were arrested, and both were found guilty; but Batson hanged alone. The ostler died before the sentence could be carried out.

Ostlers appear to be closely concerned in these tales of villainy. The accomplice is never the waiter, or the Boots, or the porter; always the ostler. There is an ostler in a grim story of an inn near Easingwold, in Yorkshire, the *White House* inn, now a farmhouse. The motive here was not greed but illicit love. The landlord was a former lover of a married woman, Mrs. Fletcher, who, tiring of her husband, turned to the man she hadn't married. As her shopping business took her frequently past his inn, she got into the habit of stopping there and renewing old memories. Soon these visits grew more frequent and lasted longer than a few minutes; until, after some months, the thought of murder, which once would have horrified them, imperceptibly possessed the couple, so that they came to talk of it as naturally as they had talked of these secret meetings. Coldly and

casually they decided to get rid of the husband, and they fixed the occasion for his next journey to the town. When that day arrived the woman, the landlord, and his ostler awaited him at a bridge near the inn that crossed a small stream. There in the darkness they waited for him, and, on his approach, they leapt upon him and threw him into the stream. The ostler and the landlord knelt upon him and held his head under the water, while the wife held his legs. When life was gone, they packed the body in a sack, and buried it in the inn garden.

After this, superstitious legend creeps in. The dead man came to life, and wherever the innkeeper went the phantom kept company with him; a pale phantom glowing with phosphorescent light, and pointing the finger of retribution at him. For some days he lived with it, but at last its presence became unbearable, and he made a full confession. He and the ostler and his sweetheart were tried, and the three were hanged at York in 1623. The bodies, after execution, were hung on a gallows outside the inn until they dropped.

Superstition enters largely into a murder story connected with the *Sun* inn, in Lincolnshire, but in East Anglian villages superstition is still seriously accounted more accurate than fact. Fenland villagers to-day still put faith in malevolent witches and wise women. They do not attempt to explain the supernatural; they accept it; and no doubt the story of the *Sun* inn is still believed. Certainly it was a current and accepted story in the 'sixties, and as there is nobody who can contradict it, perhaps we may take it as proof that not only murderers are haunted by their crime, but also the witnesses of the murder. It has some authenticity, in that it was related to Thomas Miller, the author of *Gideon Giles the Roper* and other novels of Nottingham Forest, by the parson who took the dying confession of the eye-

witness. Although closely connected with an inn, it is not a tale of landlord's villainy, but of customer's villainy.

It began on a day of November, 1805—a fortnight after Trafalgar—in a village of Lincolnshire some four miles from the city of Lincoln. It concerns Thomas Otter and John Dunkerly. Hollywood may think it knows something of speedway marriage and electric divorce, but in the year of Trafalgar a simple English peasant had all Hollywood records under a glass case. On the morning of 3rd November, 1805, Thomas Otter married a wife, and at seven o'clock that evening he murdered her. John Dunkerly saw him do it.

John Dunkerly appears to have been what is known as a good scout, popular with his fellows and conforming to local customs and occasions. His only blemish was a certain sniggering little vice, found to-day in both town and country yokels, particularly yokels of middle-age.

He was a casual labourer, and on the late afternoon and evening of the day of the murder, having finished his work, he spent some hours of liberty, equality, and fraternity in the bar of the *Sun* inn, at Saxilby, near Lincoln. As, in those days, the tavern offered uninterrupted accommodation from half-past five in the morning until midnight, meetings often broke up, through the exhaustion of their members, at astonishingly early hours. This one broke up soon after six. The others went towards Lincoln, and Dunkerly, who lived at a village called Doddington, was left to a five-mile tramp along the bleak, chilblain countryside of East Anglia.

To reach his village he had to pass a spot called Drinsey Nook, and, as he came to the lane that led from Drinsey Nook, three men, friends of his, met him and said, merely as one passes the time of day—"You'll have company, John." They nodded towards the lane,

and told him that Tom Otter and a woman had just entered it. Dunkerly passed into the dark lane, and once there, it seems, decided to indulge his hobby with a little practical scouting. He heard the footsteps of Tom Otter and the woman ahead of him, and then (he said) he heard Otter say: "Sit down. You can rest here!" That remark was a cue for Dunkerly, as it would have been to others of his turn of mind; and he thereupon climbed through the hedge on to the damp turf of the field, and came silently alongside and behind them. This action, otherwise purposeless (for neither Otter nor the woman was anything to him) was clearly inspired by the hope of seeing what such creatures do hope to see when they crawl upon a love-making couple. But what Mr. Dunkerly saw exceeded his expectations, and the punishment that followed the hope of indulging his sniggering vice was sharper even than that of Tom of Coventry.

Suddenly (he said) while he waited for the comedy to begin, the tragedy began. Otter left the woman, climbed into the hedge within three paces of the croucher, and with a mighty twist pulled a stake from the hedge; pulled it out of two feet of earth. Dunkerly's story goes on: "The moon shined on his face at the time and his eyes frighted me, there was such a fiery look in them, like a cat's eyes in the dark, and I heard him say to himself, 'That'll finish my ——— wedding!' Then he climbed down to where she was sitting with her head hanging down, and he swung the hedge-stake with both hands and hit her a clout on the head. She gave one scream and called on God for mercy, then tumbled over with her head on the ground. He hit her head again as it lay on the grass, and that time the knock sounded as though he had hit a turnip. I saw her arms and her legs all of a quiver-like for a while, and then she was as still as a cobble-stone. I think I went off in a faint.

When I came round again, the hedge-stake he had murdered her with lay close beside me. I took it up and my hand was covered with red, and my smock sleeve dabbled with it. Then I thought if they found me in that state they'd take me up for the murder and hang me, so for days I wandered about, I don't know how long, working on the roads and getting a job as how I could. I come back to Doddington on the twentieth of March."

That is the beginning of the story. The next point is the finding of the body and the arrest of Tom Otter. And here began the first of a series of oddities that marked every stage of this affair. The *Sun* inn at Saxilby has a prominent place in them. In this inn Tom Otter was arrested. Its sign was the *Sun*, and it was by sunshine that he was caught. He was sitting by the window, in a shaft of winter sunlight, and the sunlight fell upon a portion of his coat and threw up a multi-coloured sheen; and this sheen or scintillation was so marked that it held the eye of a rural constable on duty in the roadway; a constable who had had enough experience of farmyards to recognise that sheen. To the *Sun* inn, too, the body was brought for inquest. The cart that carried it had a bare floor, with gaps between its planks, so that the road it travelled was stained with blood, and blood fell upon the steps of the *Sun's* door, and the domestics who were asked to cleanse them resigned their positions in a body. Four months of scrubbing showed no result. The *Sun* inn, again, acquired from the police, as an exhibit to attract custom, the hedge-stake with which the murder was done; and the household knew no peace until they parted with it.

Otter was tried on 12th March 1806, sentenced to death, and hanged on 14th March. He was "turned off" at the corner of the Castle wall at Lincoln at the moment when the famous bell, "Great Tom," began

to strike twelve. But the sentence carried the extra penalty of gibbeting; after death his body was to be hung in chains at Drinsey Nook until it dropped.

Around this gibbeting other things began to happen. It was not until 20th March that the post and the chains were ready, and 20th March was a day of gale. A body of strong men was engaged for the business of rearing the gibbet and fixing the body in its chains, but even their strength could hardly conquer the wind of fen-land, and there were accidents. Nature seemed to be on the side of the murderer. After the cart bearing the body had crossed Saxilby Bridge, the bridge broke down and dropped a score of the attendant crowd into the river. When the post was at last erected, the tackle by which the men hauled the body to the beam broke twice, and the body and its irons fell upon them and flung them to the ground. Among those hauling was Mr. Dunkerly. When, the second time, they had hauled it to the top, Dunkerly made a rash, and, in the solemn circumstances, tactless remark. Glad, no doubt, to reclaim and display his equanimity after his scare of the past few months, he said lightly; "Well, he won't come down any more." And down came Tom Otter, crashing heavily on Dunkerly's hand.

Even when he was finally and for ever hauled and fixed, it seemed that he had not finished with Dunkerly. Whenever Dunkerly wished to visit the *Sun*—and he frequently did—he had to pass that gibbet. He could never pass it without looking at it, and one night, having forgotten his lesson at the gibbeting, he was again ill-bred enough to address the body, "You gave me a bit of a turn once with your eyes," he told it, "and you made my hand quite bad. But you'll do nowt to me no more." And with that a sudden gust of wind swung the body forward, so that the iron on the swinging boot only missed Dunkerly's temple because Dunkerly dodged.

But the centre of the story is the hedge-stake. It spent many years at the *Sun* inn, and, as I have said, it caused some trouble there. Once a year, on the morning of each 4th November, it was missing, and on each occasion it was found a mile away—lying in the field behind the hedge where the murder was done. After some years of these happenings, the landlord decided that there was something a little queer about this hedge-stake, and with an air of altruism he passed it to a tavern at Torksey that had long coveted it. Here, the landlord, who set a value upon it and suspected that it might be coveted by some of his customers, had it clamped to the wall of one of the public rooms with two or three iron hasps. But on the next 4th November they found the hasps torn out of the wall, and no stake. It was recovered, as before, from the field at Drinsey Nook. This landlord, feeling, in his turn, that it was no ordinary hedge-stake, passed it to the *Peewit Inn*, and its new owner engaged a blacksmith of Saxilby, the blacksmith who had made the gibbet irons for the body of the murderer, to make three cast-iron staples to secure it. On the night of the next 3rd November both stake and staples were missing. The stake was recovered and again clamped to the wall with six clamps. There it remained until the next 3rd November, when a party of villagers agreed to stay the night in the inn and sit up with the landlord and watch it. But they had to sit in darkness and silence, and only trained watchers can do that. One by one the party went to sleep, and when they awoke in the morning the stake was gone.

But that was the last of its outings. The story got about, and created unrest and fear, and rumours of these matters began to trouble the halls of authority. It was decided that something must be done to allay the superstitious fears of the peasantry—anything that we don't experience ourselves is superstition—so, by

order of the Bishop of Lincoln, the stake was removed from the inn, and one night, with a lofty scorn of vulgar errors, it was solemnly and superstitiously burnt under the walls of the cathedral. Thereafter there was an end to vulgar gossip, and there was peace for John Dunkerly.

For the secret of the stake's outings lay with him, and if he had died suddenly it would have remained with him. But during his last illness he had the frequent ministrations of a pastor, and to him he told the story. In nearly these words:

"It was the very night of the murder, exactly a twelve-month afterwards, that I felt doley-like, so I went to bed about dusk-hours, and what I'm trying to tell you is as true as I'm a dying man. I couldn't nohow sleep, and while I was like that, all of a sudden Tom Otter stood in front of me in his chains, and says: 'It's time. Come along.' And I had to go with him. And he says: 'Fetch it—make haste.' And I broke into the *Sun* inn, at Saxilby, and fetched the hedge-stake that he murdered her with from off the nail where it was hanging up, and when I got outside the door they were both waiting for me, and we all three went over Saxilby drawbridge together. She was walking behind and carrying a paper box in one hand and a pair of pattens in the other. She was wearing the light blue gown that she had on that very night the year before. He had the same light velveteen jacket and breeches that he had on when he came through the hedge and tore up the stake that I was carrying then. It was a kind of mist we seemed to be walking in. We turned down Drinsey Nook lane, and reached the same spot we reached before, and he used the very same words, and said: 'Sit down. You can rest here.' And she sat down with her head drooping on her breast, like before, and

he come to me with his eyes more fiery then they was before-time, and says: 'Now then, quick!' And somehow I threw up the hedge-stake with both hands and murdered her just the way he murdered her twelve months before. I give her one clout when she was sitting down, and another when she'd fallen over. And every 3rd of November for years, no matter where I might be, the same low-doley feeling came over me, and Tom Otter'd come to me in his chains and say: 'Now then, it's time,' and I had to go and fetch the hedge-stake from wherever it might be, and do the same murdering over again, and twice when it was fastened up with staples he come and helped me pull and said: 'You pulled hard enough when you helped to gibbet me!' And for years this went on, and the hedge-stake was always found in the stubble-field next morning where I'd thrown it like he did, and when I'd find myself walking back home I'd be all wet with sweat. And I hadn't no peace till the stake was burnt in the Minster Yard. After that was done they never come to fetch me to go with 'em to murder her no more."

There is in Whitechapel a public-house that should stir the imagination of all schoolboys, if schoolboys still read Harrison Ainsworth. It is the *Red Lion;* not, unfortunately, the old *Red Lion*, but a *Red Lion* rebuilt on the site of the old. It was here that Dick Turpin, seeking to aid the escape of his partner, Tom King, shot him with a bullet intended for the constable. They had been doing a little horse-stealing, and they left the stolen horse at the *Red Lion.* The owner, having spread the news of his loss, received information that such a horse was at the *Red Lion.* He went there, saw that the horse was his, and reported to a constable. The constable advised him to wait until it was claimed, and then charge whoever came for it.

Late at night a brother of King's came for it. He was at once seized and charged, but as they suspected Turpin to be behind it, and were anxious to get him, they offered to release the youth if he would tell them who sent him. He said that a tall man in a white coat was waiting outside. They thereupon went out, discovered the tall man to be Tom King, and arrested him. Turpin, who was hanging about near by, saw this and came to the rescue. King cried out: "Shoot him, Dick, or we're taken!" Turpin fired, missed the constable, and hit King, who died a few days later.

Upon this, Turpin had to fly, and he flew (not to York in one day, which was never done by him or by anybody else in the eighteenth century, but *was* done in the seventeenth by Samuel Nicks), he flew to Long Sutton in Lincolnshire, where for some time he combined horse-stealing and country-gentlemanliness. Later he moved to Welton, in Yorkshire, and there, by an outbreak of the original Turpin, he undid himself. For no reason at all he shot a neighbour's poultry in the street, and, on his conduct being challenged, threatened to shoot the neighbour too.

The neighbour at once swore the peace against him, and he was ordered to enter into sureties for his good behaviour. He was now in a fix. He was a well-known man who was not really known to anybody, and when he went to seek sureties he could find none. As a result, he was committed, and as he occupied a somewhat ambiguous position in the district the authorities thought that, having him under lock and key, they might as well make a few enquiries. The enquiries concerning the well-known "Mr. Palmer" brought a lot of stories, all of which were in some way connected with missing horses and sheep; but they made nothing stronger against him than suspicion. They were about to release him when, as criminals so often do, he gave

them the one clue that probably they would never otherwise have stumbled upon. He wrote to his brother.

From York Castle he wrote to his brother at their old home at Hempstead, Essex, stating that he was about to be charged with horse-stealing, but that all would go well if somebody would come up from London to swear to his character. The letter ended: "You know what I mean when I say that I am, Yours, John Palmer." As the postage had not been paid, his brother refused to take it in, and it was returned to the post-office. The postmaster was also the schoolmaster, and as he had taught Turpin to write he recognised the writing as that of his young scholar who had now become notorious as a wanted criminal. He therefore took the letter to a magistrate, who opened it, and rightly guessed that John Palmer was Dick Turpin. The schoolmaster was despatched to York, and, on a parade of prisoners, was asked to pick out Richard Turpin. He at once picked out John Palmer, as the son of John Turpin, landlord of the *Bell*, at Hempstead.

Turpin was convicted on two charges of horse-stealing, and was hanged at Knavesmire in 1739.

At the present *Red Lion* they still keep the original locks and bolts of the old house, and a contemporary Catnach depicting the shooting of Tom King; and they will show you the pistol that Turpin used. I don't suppose that it was his pistol, but it doesn't matter; it looks as though it might have been, and that should be good enough. Imagination can work with equal effect upon fact or fable. For many years people used to get a historic thrill from the sight of the last shirt worn by Charles I. That the shirt wasn't genuine didn't make the thrill any less genuine. The real shirt was lying somewhere else, and evoking no emotion; thus proving

once again how futile truth is, and how seldom it can prevail against fancy.

To end these anecdotes on a happy country tone, let us turn to the *Anchor*, at Ripley. The *Anchor* has no history in the sense of dire or portentous event, but it was given a story, and became famous, by the invention of the bicycle. When bicycles first appeared in country roads, no words were too harsh for them and their riders. Cyclists were outcasts—"Cads on casters" was the term applied by the elegant owners of landaus and broughams. Not only were they insulted: they were often attacked; and the doors of inns were closed upon these ruffians as, in many cases, they are closed to-day upon those who, unable to afford a Baby Austin, use the char-a-banc. But one inn near London gave them shelter and welcome. This was the *Anchor*, kept by the Misses Dibble; and so appreciative were the cycling pariahs of the welcome extended to them that you will find in the church a memorial window to the landladies, with a note that it was set up in grateful memory by subscriptions from the various London cycling clubs.

One other memorial comes to mind. In a churchyard of Market Harborough you will find a stone erected to one of a professsion seldom, in England, given the honours that are its due. The stone reads:

SUSANNA WELLS
COOK OF THE *Three Swans*
IN MARKET HARBOROUGH
FOR 41 YEARS.

CHAPTER V

THERE WAS A TAVERN IN THE TOWN

THE distinction between the tavern and the inn was drawn in the Act of Edward VI., already mentioned, and it still stands in law. In social usage, too, it stands. Just as the inn of to-day serves the same purposes as the inns of the fifteenth century, so does the tavern serve tavern purposes. The inn belongs to the road; the tavern to the town. The inn's business was to shelter the wayfarer; the tavern's to feed and refresh those of its immediate neighbourhood; and from the days of Elinor Rummyng's *Running Horse*, through the *Mermaid*, the *Triple Tun*, *Locket's*, *Will's*, the *Mitre*, the *Turk's Head*, the *Salutation*, the *Coal Hole* and the *Cock*, to the saloon-bar of the modern *King's Head*, the tavern has continued to be a meeting-place for the leisure hours of those living about it; though not now for those of any social pretensions. George Crabbe gives us the essence of it:

All the comforts of life in a tavern are known,
'Tis his home who possesses not one of his own;
And to him who has rather too much of that one,
'Tis the house of a friend where he's welcome to run.
The instant you enter my door you're my lord,
With whose taste and whose pleasure I'm proud to accord;
And the longer you call and the longer you stay,
The more I am happy to serve and obey.

To the house of a friend if you're pleased to retire,
You must all things admit, you must all things admire;

You must pay with observance the price of your treat,
You must eat what is praised, you must praise what you
eat.
But here you may come, and no tax we require,
You may loudly condemn what you greatly admire;
You may growl at our wishes and pains to excel,
And may snarl at the rascals who please you so well.

At your wish we attend, and confess that your speech
Of the nation's affairs might the minister teach;
His views you may blame, and his measures oppose,
There's no tavern-treason—you're under the *Rose*.
Should rebellions arise in your own little state,
With me you may safely their consequence wait;
To recruit your lost spirits 'tis prudent to come,
And to fly to a friend when the devil's at home.

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century it was a part of the daily life of men of all ranks and degrees: a common ground where all were equal, and a centre for the gathering and disseminating of news. Men used it as their postal address, their business office, and their general rendezvous. Lawyers, money-lenders, publishers, employment agents, quack doctors, court officials—all were "to be heard of" at such-and-such a tavern. It appears constantly in the drama and the novel. Some of the liveliest scenes of the old dramatists were their tavern scenes, and it was as much a part of the town scenes of the novelists as the streets themselves.

At the time of Edward VI. London was restricted to forty taverns. By the early eighteenth century it was, in proportion to its size, as thick with them as it is to-day. The term coffee-house had then come into usage, but the coffee-houses of that period were not purely coffee-houses, as the pioneer houses of the seventeenth century were—the *Smyrna*, the *Rosee's*

Head, and *Garraway's*. They were still in the old sense taverns, and though they served coffee they also served wine. But men did not go there solely to drink. They went to smoke, to sit in warmth, to read (or hear read) the journals, and, above all, to transact their business and to gossip.

Each place had its social and professional "tone," and gathered about it men of like tastes and sympathies. The poets and wits had their particular haunts—at respective periods Raleigh and Shakespeare and Beaumont had the *Mermaid*; Ben Jonson had the *Devil*; Dryden had *Will's*; Addison had *Button's*; Hogarth had *Slaughter's*, and so on—the different political sects had *their* special taverns, the lawyers had theirs, the players had theirs, the citizens and merchants had theirs. Even Cabinet Ministers did not disdain it, and the *Journal to Stella* has continual references to Swift's tavern discussions and plottings with the leaders of his party. Gradually, among the frequenters of each house, small groups began to gather and to detach themselves from others, and soon these groups were meeting in a private room to which the rest of the company was not admitted. From this casual arrangement grew the club that we know to-day. One only of these coteries has lasted into our own time in its original form. This is the Antient Society of Cogers. This debating society, formed in the middle of the eighteenth century, met originally at a tavern in Shoe Lane; then at a tavern in Bride Lane; then at the *Barley Mow* in Salisbury Square, and now meets at the *Cock*, in Fleet Street.

Steele gives a good picture of the "humours" of the taverns of his day, in the paper in which he presents the differing receptions of the news of the death of the French King:

> I afterwards called in at *Giles'*, where I saw a

board of French gentlemen sitting upon the life and death of their Grand Monarque. Those of them who had espoused the Wigg Interest very positively affirmed that he departed this life about a week since, and therefore proceeded without any further delay to the release of their friends on the gallies. Upon my arrival at *Jenny Man's* I saw an alert young fellow that cocked his hat upon a friend of his, and accosted him after the following manner. Well, Jack, the old Prig is dead at last. Sharp's the word. Up to the walls of Paris directly. Upon my going into *Will's* I found their discourse was gone off from the death of the French King to that of Monsieur Boileau, Racine, Corneille, and several other poets, whom they regretted on this occasion, as persons who would have obliged the world with several noble elegies on the death of so great a Prince. I then turned into Fish Street, where the chief politician of that quarter, upon hearing the news, If, says he, the King of France is dead, we shall have plenty of Mackerel this season.

Steele's familiarity with the taverns was as real as is here suggested. Not only were many of his essays written at their tables, but several of his letters to his Darling Prue are dated from them:

> Dear Wife: Mr. Edgcumb, Ned Ask, and Mr. Lumley have desired me to sit an hour with them at the *George*, for which I desire your patience till twelve o'clock, and that you will go to bed.

In another letter he promises to be with her within half a bottle.

An important feature of tavern life was the Ordinary, which, much changed in form and spirit, survives to-day in the *table d'hote*. But in those days it was served

at a common table, and conversation was general. It was first introduced in 1560 by Richard Tarleton, the comedian, at his tavern near St. Paul's, and it carried its popularity into the nineteenth century. At different periods the meal was served at different hours of the day, according to the prevailing fashion. When first introduced it was served at the then usual dining hour of eleven o'clock. Fifty years later the hour was two o'clock. Later still, it was three o'clock, and then five o'clock. After the passing of the Ordinary, dining was put farther back in the day, and from being half-past seven, at the end of the nineteenth century, it has become in our day nine o'clock. How much later it may yet be one cannot say, but we are getting so near the habits of the Boojum that it looks as though a facetious idea may soon become a fact.

Dekker gives us a good picture of the diverse appeal of the Ordinary:

> He found that an Ordinary was the only rendezvous for the most ingenious, most terse, most travelled, and most fantastic gallant; the very Exchange for news out of all countries; the only Bookseller's shop for a conference of the best editions, that if a woman (to be a Lady) would cast away herself upon a knight, *there* a man should hear a catalogue of most of the richest London widows; and last, that it was a school where they were all fellows of one form, and that a country gentleman was of as great coming as ye proudest Justice that sat there on the bench above him; for he that had the grain of the table with his trencher payed no more than he that placed himself beneath the salt.

The Ordinary consisted of several dishes, of which one took as much as he pleased, at a fixed price. In

the time of James I. the usual price was a shilling, for which would be served beef and beans, a capon, a duck, cake and fruit. Pepys dined frequently at that price, but by his time prices had begun to vary according to the tone of the place and the dishes it served. Pontack's, a French establishment, charged a guinea, and its price for a bottle of wine was seven shillings. Some time later Johnson was able to dine daily at a tenpenny Ordinary, and Smollett speaks of one even cheaper—the "dive," so called because the premises were in a basement. This would be the equivalent of our Good Pull-Up for Carmen. "I have seen many a pretty gentleman, with a laced waistcoat, dine in that manner very comfortable for threepence-halfpenny, and go afterwards to the coffee-house, where he made a figure with the best lord in the land." The fare of the "dive" was boiled beef, shin of beef, tripe, cow-heel, and sausages; the fare of Pontack's was stewed snails, baby chicks, and all the best French dishes of the time.

To-day the Ordinary, as a general assembly at one table, survives in some small country towns on market-days; it lives in London in but one place—Simpson's Fish Ordinary, in the City.

Up to the early part of the nineteenth century, as we know, the tavern had a distinguished and honourable life. Then came its decline. The clubs and coteries of the London taverns began to gather such largely increased membership that they found it inconvenient to meet at taverns, and they built their own premises. White's Coffee House, in St. James, was actually the first club. This was already established as a coffee-house, and was taken over by a group of its frequenters, who wished to exclude the general public. From that one building grew all those other buildings of St. James, Pall Mall, and Piccadilly, which now constitute the club world of London.

The withdrawal from the tavern of its patrons of the higher class caused it to sink in general esteem, and by the middle of the nineteenth century it was socially outcast, and has remained so. A faint attempt to recover its old spirit and purpose was made by various art and literary groups of the 'nineties, but as most of the members of these groups were scarcely exemplary characters, their efforts towards rehabilitating it went somewhat askew. But although socially outcast, it did not die. When the better classes had had what they wanted of it, the reversion passed to the working-classes, and the working-classes put it to much the same uses as their masters. They made it the headquarters of *their* affairs, and in this service it continues to-day. It serves as a Lodge of the Foresters, the Druids, the Buffaloes, the Hearts of Oak, and other friendly societies, as well as the office of Christmas Clubs, Sick Benefit Clubs, Summer Outing Clubs, Angling Clubs, Gardening Clubs, Bird-fanciers' Clubs, and Skittle Clubs. And, of course, as a meeting-place for gossip.

But so far as London is concerned, it is no longer the tavern. It is the Pub. Pub is an uncouth word, but it is apt, for it expresses what in its present form is an uncouth thing. When the old taverns began to pass into the hands of brewers, somewhere about the 'seventies, they passed into their most horrid period. All the flaring, roaring, gilt-and-plate-glass abominations that for so many years stood at nearly every corner, and still stand in large numbers, were the work of these people; and not one of them was deserving of the gracious word tavern. Pub was just the right name. Why they were so foolish as to kill the individual tavern, and set up the standardised gin-palace, I do not know. One would have thought that their usually active commercial sense would have told them that it was wrong; since most business people have learned—

and use in their advertising—the appeal of the thing that is outside prevailing standards: as "The cigarette that is *different*," "Furniture out of the ordinary," "A *new* kind of teashop," and so on. But they didn't; they went right on running up their standardised places so that a man could not tell whether he was in the *White Monkey* of Shepherd's Bush or the *Baby Elephant*, of Hackney.

Within the last few years, however, these people have begun to share the disgust of the public with their work, and have attempted to mend matters; but with no great success. Certainly they pulled down some of these wretched places, but although they had the opportunity of erecting something in harmony with these times and with the new buildings about them, they could do no more with the opportunity than erect gimcrack copies of the Tudor and Jacobean style, which are neither of that period nor of this. Having altered their buildings, they tried to alter the style of their business, which they did with equal grace. They tried to make their houses restaurants, and have at last succeeded in making them nothing—not taverns, not pubs, and not restaurants, but a blend of the three at their worst. All they did was to turn the old-time bar into a greasy cook-shop, in which the bar and restaurant share the same room. The food is exposed to the smoke and smell incidental to a bar, and the bar reeks with the smell of food.

If you wonder why they made this sudden clumsy attempt at transforming straightforward vulgar pubs into third-rate cook-shops, the reason will be found in the word Prohibition. If a modified form of Prohibition became law—say a restriction of the sale of liquor to restaurants only—they could immediately claim that their houses were restaurants; a bold claim, perhaps, but legally good. If Prohibition arrived in complete form, they could, at little expense, convert the place

into nothing but a restaurant, and possibly, one dares to hope, a somewhat better restaurant. That is the motive of these places, and very soon, I think, it will be justified. The tavern was killed by the club, and history is going to repeat itself by killing the pub in the same way; for, according to the latest recommendations of the Licensing Commission, it is to be displaced by the working-men's club. There will then be no more taverns in the town, and, no matter how bored Mr. Chesterton may be by talk of spirals whirling round, of Life, and Mrs. Humphry Ward, it will be futile for him to appeal for someone to lead him to a pub.

But for the moment, despite the misguided energy of the brewers, one may still find in London a few places that have escaped the fury of standardisation, and do approximate somewhat to the original idea of the tavern. Perhaps the wine-shops—the establishments of El Vino, Henekey, and Short—and the smoking-room of the big restaurants and hotels come nearest to it. The first are fitted in the old style, the second in the modern style; but each has something of the right atmosphere, and you may take your choice of old and new. Henekey's provides newspapers and a writing-table, with somewhat better ink than Post Office ink, and you can use the smoking-rooms and lounges of the restaurants and hotels as men formerly used their tavern or coffee-house.

There also remain a few little houses, privately owned, which are run, not merely as places that sell drink, but as resting-places and rendezvous. They are not quite taverns, but they are more than pubs: places with a character behind them and an atmosphere about them. That is the difference that marks the tavern from the pub—the one has personality, the other is merely a building. These places are not numerous, but they can be found, and when they are found they usually afford

some of that entertainment which it was once the duty of the landlord to provide. Just as the innkeeper loosed his humours in his sign, so does the proper publican release his in the details of his house. There is a house in an inner suburb called the *Ship Ahoy*. It is kept by a retired seaman. His bars are not named Public Bar, Private Bar, Saloon Bar and Lounge. They are Foc'sle, Lower Deck, Upper Deck, and Cabin. There is a house at Brighton which bears, at the side of the door, a solemnly facetious brass plate, reading: "Dr. Brighton. Consulting Hours, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.—5 to 10 p.m." There is a house at Nottingham which must possess the largest collection of theatrical portraits ever brought together in one place. The walls of the passages, the walls of the rooms, the tops of the tables, every available inch of space is covered with portraits of past and present music-hall and theatre celebrities. How many there are nobody knows. Attempts have been made to count them, but the winner of the long-distance record had to give up at something like eighteen hundred. Near Bognor is a house decorated in a somewhat similar way, but in this case with used English and foreign stamps. One room is papered entirely by nothing but stamps. In King Street, St. James, there was, until a few years ago, a place that had followed this idea with nothing but cigar-bands. There is a little house I know at Stepney whose landlord has let himself go in a riot of printing orders. Wherever you look—on the walls, on the floor, on the panels of the counter, on the sides of the fire-place, and even on the ceiling—are warnings and exhortations; not very funny, perhaps, but suggesting fun. You buy something. You turn away from the bar, and an electric panel over the fire-place suddenly lights up with this: "Please count your change twice. You know what we are." If you go to the lounge to sit, a small card tucked in the back of the

lounge catches your eye: "Don't leave your glasses on the seats. It's bad for my glasses and your seats." Elsewhere you see: "The man that spoke out of his turn last night is slowly recovering."—"Don't carry coals to Newcastle. If it's bad language, the guv'nor was once a printer."—"What George Washington couldn't do we can. Read our advertisements." As you go out a small box by the side of the door says: "Please Take One." The box contains a number of cards, bearing the name and sign of the house, with this message: "You're no Adonis, but we'd like to see your face again."

This landlord may not be in the true succession of wits, but at least his efforts show that he is taking an interest in his house, and trying to lift it from the prevailing dreariness. An example of the lackadaisical type may be found at a London house which has close associations with George Morland. The saloon is decorated in the usual style—hideous whisky advertisements on the walls, and aspidistras in art pots on the tables. When I asked the landlord why he couldn't take down those wretched posters, and announce the George Morland story, and celebrate it with a few Morland prints, he said, "Eh?" When I explained the story he said: "Oh . . . Ah . . . Yes, I've heard something about it. But I got no time to go into that sort of thing. I got my business to attend to." When I pointed out that if he did as I suggested he might have a lot more business to attend to, he looked as Falstaff might have looked at the word battle. But it is just these little touches that make a place something more than a place that sells things. Where would the *Cheshire Cheese* be without Dr. Johnson? Or the *King's Head* of Chigwell without Dickens? Or the *Red Horse*, of Stratford, without Washington Irving? The owners of these places know their business, and realise the

drawing power of old associations upon the sentimental traveller.

In the public-house, as in the inn, everything depends upon the landlord. The good landlord can "make" the shabbiest house; the indifferent landlord can do nothing with the most firmly established house. Take that little house off Tottenham Court Road kept by the Brothers Egbert. It is a very small place, but they have given it character. You perceive on entering that it is no ordinary place, and it is worth entering if only to see the famous knockabout brothers as you have never seen them in public—tranquil; to find them sitting in the bar, detached from the world of fisticuffs and whitewash, discoursing serene duets on guitar and mandolin. It is like seeing Edmund Ironside in bed-socks, or Tamerlane eating bread-and-milk. There is character, too, in a little place in Queen Square, called the *Queen's Larder*. Here is a real village inn, complete with bare, well-scrubbed tables and benches, darts, dominoes, flowers in the window, tidiness, and welcome. It stands in the centre of London, but as you look out upon the trees of Queen Square you have the illusion of looking out from a wayside tavern upon the hedgerow. Another place with a flavour is the *Hoop and Grapes*, at Butchers' Row, Aldgate. This is a late seventeenth-century house, with a tiny entrance-yard, two oaken door-posts with contemporary carving, a huge lock to the door, small-paned windows on the skew, and projecting bays and dormer roof above. It has been aptly modernised without the loss of any of its inward character, and one is aware that it has matured by contact with generations of men. It is fully as interesting as the *Cheshire Cheese*, but it has no Dr. Johnson, and so country and American tourists do not know it or visit it. If it could but produce a Fielding legend, or a Lamb or Byron or Tennyson

legend, you wouldn't be able to get inside its door on a summer noon.

Not far from Aldgate is the *Town of Ramsgate*, in Wapping High Street—a little, low-pitched waterside inn, adjoining Wapping Old Stairs. This is the house where Judge Jeffreys was caught. It was then called the *Red Cow*. On the flight of James II., Jeffreys decided that it would be wise to follow the Royal example, and so, disguised as a seamen, he came to Wapping to find a ship for Hamburg. He mistook his time, and having several hours to wait, he went to the *Red Cow* for refreshment. He had shaved off his eyebrows, and was wearing a seaman's suit black with coal-dust. His face also was grimed, and he had every reason for thinking himself secure. But his was a face that, by reason of his words and behaviour to those in his power, stamped itself upon the memory. While taking his refreshment in the *Red Cow*, he stood at the window, and, by that fatality which often dogs the wicked in life as well as in Sunday-school stories, an attorney whom he had once bullied in court passed by. The attorney gave but one glance, and then roused the neighbourhood with the news that Jeffreys was in their hands. In a few moments the house was surrounded by a crowd of many hundreds, and Jeffreys was only saved from lynching by the arrival of a volunteer company, who arrested him and carried him to the Tower where he died miserably but peacefully.

Another ancient house that suffers, like the *Hoop and Grapes*, from having no legend, is the *Anchor*, at Bankside. This is a late-seventeenth or early-eighteenth century house almost wholly of wood; a typical old waterside tavern. A house of this name stood here in the days of the Globe Theatre, and portions of the present house must belong to that period. Greene and Nash and Peele, perhaps Shakespeare himself—or the author of the

Shakespeare plays—may have drunk here; but nobody has said so, and there is no carefully dressed legend; and therefore no pilgrims.

Here are a few other places that have no story or distinction, but are just amusing places for ten minutes or so.

I like the *Spaniards*, at Hampstead, and its little garden—a real tavern garden—is delightful in summer twilight. It was an early landlord of the *Spaniards* who saved Lord Mansfield's Ken Wood house from destruction at the time of the Gordon Riots. The London mob was advancing upon it when the landlord, perceiving their intention, affected sympathy with them and invited them to drink at his charge. They accepted his invitation, and he took pains to see that they were made truly welcome. By the time they had taken full advantage of their welcome they were in no state to pursue their business. Most of them had forgotten what they came out for, and those who remembered had reached the stage where trifles were not worth bothering about. I like the *Queen's Head*, in Essex Road, for its ceiling, and its panelled parlour. This was one of the first houses licensed by Sir Walter Raleigh. I like the *Sun in Splendour*, at Notting Hill, for its grotto and its waterfall and its wonderful dog. The dog is worth knowing. The landlord takes him out of the room. You hide a penny in any place you choose—say, under a vase on a shelf. The dog is brought in, and, within a minute, without any hint or direction, it finds that penny. Having found it, it takes it to the counter and buys a biscuit, just like Mazard in *A Cruise Upon Wheels*. I like the *Greyhound*, at Croydon, which, by turning part of its premises into a theatre—a serious repertory theatre—is fulfilling one of the earliest functions of the tavern and inn. I like the *Doves*, at Hammersmith, for its associations with eighteenth-century letters, and for

itself. I like the *Bedford Head*, in Maiden Lane, because it is kept by Mr. Russell who, years ago, afforded us so much laughter when he was Charles Chaplin's "schoolboy" partner in *The Mumming Birds*. And the *Green Man*, in St. Martin's Lane, because it is kept by another droll who increased the stock of human pleasure—Mr. George Mozart. And the seventeenth-century *Windmill*, on Clapham Common, which, before the automobile, was as much a part of Derby Day as Tattenham Corner. And that other old *Windmill*, in Clerkenwell, one of the few surviving commercial hotels for City business men. And the *Coach and Horses*, in the Italian quarter, where the organ-men gather. And the *Ship and Shovel*, in Bermondsey, an eighteenth-century house, frequented by Guy's men. And the *Ship*, at Shad Thames, which has gone on being a village tavern as though unaware that London is now a city. Then there are those taverns which, if they do not offer entertainment in the form of music and sing-song, offer it in other forms.

Many years ago, when music and dancing were first prohibited in taverns, it became the custom for publicans to go to much trouble in making their houses interesting, and to this end some of them formed collections of curiosities. A few only of these now remain. The *Marquis of Granby*, at New Cross, still has its collection of weapons and other trophies; the *Union*, at Camberwell, its bird specimens from all parts of the world; the *Wheatsheaf*, at Aldgate, its war museum; and the *Hole in the Wall*, in the Borough, its collection of all sorts of curios. The *George*, in George Court, off the Strand, used to have a living aviary on its roof, but this has now gone. The *Bell and Mackerel*, at Mile End, still has, I hope, its exhaustive entomological collection which I saw some years ago. This was a serious collection of many thousands of specimens, properly displayed

and documented; as interesting to the student of insect life as the collection of old play-bills at *Rule's* must be to students of the stage. The *Widow's Son*, at Bromley-by-Bow, is well known for its collection of mouldering hot-cross-buns. The collection attaches to a legend. In the early nineteenth century, a house on this site was kept by a widow whose son had gone to sea. He was expected home on a Good Friday, and the widow had prepared for him some hot-cross-buns. He did not come, and he was never heard of again. But the mother continued to hope that he would some day return, and each Good Friday she set aside for him a hot-cross-bun, adding it to those already set aside, now black and hard. When the house passed into other hands at her death, the collection of buns was found, and when local people explained its significance the buns were hung in the main bar, and every Good Friday since a fresh bun has been added to the dried cluster.

In the past the keeping of a tavern or ale-house was regarded as a particularly suitable occupation for widows, and any poor widow could obtain a licence to open a tavern as a means of livelihood. Since it was a business that was certain to yield enough profit to support her, it relieved the parish from supporting her, and it was taken for granted that a widow was a serious person who would conduct herself properly. Generally, she did; and it has been shown in recent times that a woman can maintain order in such a place as well as a man. Indeed, men in fractious mood will more often take notice of a woman's orders than a man's. When they are in that mood, and receive a peremptory order from a man to be quiet or get out, they usually want to fight the man; when they receive it from a woman they are helpless. Some echo of boyhood instinct compels them to obey.

But tavern disorder, since the opening of the twentieth

century, has almost disappeared. Where it does appear it is almost always a sign of some fault in the landlord, as a disorderly class is a sign, not of bad boys, but of a bad form-master. The landlord of a tavern or pub has almost as difficult a job as the innkeeper. He must keep his house in a somewhat relaxed atmosphere, but must see that nobody takes advantage of the general freedom. He must impose discipline without the slightest appearance of imposing it; be an artist utterly conscious of art. On the whole he does it very well.

And he should, seeing that he is a picked man who has to pass a more stringent examination than any entrant for any other profession. A publican expressed himself to me on this matter a week or two ago; forcibly, but not, on consideration, extravagantly:

"You can go," he said, "into almost any business with only half the examination you have to go through before you can take a pub. There's rogues in every business except the one business that the righteous look down on. That's our business. A man couldn't be a rogue in our business for more than an hour. And he certainly couldn't have made the smallest slip before he came into it. If he had, he'd never get into it. You might almost say that every man's a possible rogue except the publican, just as you might say that every man's mad except the discharged lunatic. Because the discharged lunatic's the only man who holds an official certificate of sanity, and the publican's the only man who holds an official certificate of absolute straight character. He's got to, or he'd never be allowed to have a pub. You can go into the church, the law, medicine —anything you like—and you don't go through half the microscopic examination you do when you try to get into this business. They go over your record with a small-tooth comb, and if there's the slightest speck— Nah-poo. The government gives peerages to lots of

men whose records wouldn't give 'em the slightest chance of getting a licence from the Licensing Justices. Any twister can get into the House of Lords, but seriously, before you can be a publican, you've got to have a character pretty near to Jesus Christ. And as soon as you're a publican, everybody looks down on you as a dirty dog—not only teetotallers but your own customers. Plenty of people will invite swindling financiers, and crooked M.P.'s, and twisty solicitors to dinner, who'd never dream of asking a publican to their house. They look on it as like asking a tramp to dinner. 'Nyet, as I say, before you can get into this business you've got to show a clean record, decent habits, strong mind, honest dealing, ability to handle men, and God knows what-all."

From enquiries I have made, and from what Mr. Alexander Part says in his work on Innkeeping, he was not exaggerating. This—I am paraphrasing Mr. Part—is what an expectant publican has to do before he can even apply for permission to take over a house. He must get a letter from three householders of good standing, who can state that they have known him for five years, and that, from their knowledge, his character is unassailable. Before he makes his application, he must send notice of the application, with the three letters, to the Superintendent of Police of the district. When the Superintendent of Police has made full enquiries upon those letters, and upon anything arising from them, then he must appear before the Justices for cross-examination. He must produce references, apart from the householders' letters, showing what his previous occupations have been and his behaviour in them; and at every point he must be without blemish. This is but one stage of the proceedings; but at this stage a sensible man would give it up and propose himself for membership of an exclusive West End club.

That men can be found to pass this stringent examination no doubt explains why publicans, as a class, are always men of civil, if not polished, manners. Whether they are engaged in a harmful or harmless trade is not a matter for discussion here, but it will, I think, be admitted by all who know them that of all traders they are the most pleasant. The butcher, the grocer, the baker, has an off-hand manner, and the tailor, the draper, and the restaurateur are somewhat too servile; but the landlord or the landlady of a public-house is so commonly a really nice person that an encounter with an off-hand or surly host is so rare as to cause surprised remark. And this pleasant attitude is not an assumed attitude—assumed with the ulterior intent of luring you back to their premises and fixing you in the drink habit; you cannot successfully pretend good-humour and good-will for several hours a day. It is an instinctive essence of landlordism: they were pleasant people before they became landlords. Ulterior motive can be ruled out by the facts of their business. The picture of the landlord as one who hates teetotallers, and wants to make his customers into beer-drinkers, is ridiculous; because, first of all, landlords are not wicked people—they are as sorry for and disgusted with the drunkard as other decent people are—and secondly, business interest is against it. He makes very little profit on beer, and a very useful profit on minerals. Therefore, if he stuck solely to his own interests, he would try to make his customers drink minerals. But he doesn't do that: he isn't the coarse money-grubber that he is so often represented to be. He is following a congenial calling as much as a trade, and his chief desire is that his customers shall have just what they want, and so maintain the friendly atmosphere that he likes to live in. Wherefore, though he is making more money out of the ginger-ale and tonic-water men, he is courteous

and genial to all. Men's private habits are no concern of his. One respectable customer is as welcome as another, and he serves you the drink that means a fraction of a farthing profit as cheerfully as he serves the drink that means some pennies profit. This, because he is, when all is said, a decent man.

There is a chasm of difference between a hosier-and-customer transaction and a publican-and-customer transaction. Each is a strictly business matter, but one is business with only an edge of courtesy, the other is business with a large, easy, round-the-fire dressing to it. In each case money passes, but in essence the spirit of the tavern or public-house is what it was when first shelter and refreshment were given to the wayfarer—*hospitality*. The publican still does what no other shopkeeper does; he still, on occasions, when he knows you, asks you to have refreshment at his charge. Our bakers never ask us to have a loaf with them, or our grocers a pound of sugar with them, for grocery and bakery have no foundation of hospitality in their origins. They are commerce only. But the publican is faintly aware that he is something a little riper and rounder than a shopkeeper; that, though he may be as sharp on the commercial side of his business as other traders, it becomes him to claim the duties and pleasures of a host.

I have met few comic hatters or drapers. I have met a score of comic landlords. There seems to be some joke in the keeping of a tavern which I haven't yet discovered. Perhaps it is merely the joke which is new every morning; the joke of being alive. Certainly some sense of joke is always uppermost in these people and although its expression is usually banal, the spirit behind it is far preferable to the spirit behind the stockbroker, or the stationer, or the tailor. It comes, I think, from innate goodness and a generous outlook.

You find the best type of publican, perhaps, in the

small country towns where the tavern—not the pub—survives and continues to fulfil tavern functions. The landlord of the city house has few opportunities for exercising the larger inward nature of his calling, but in the small country town the opportunities are endless, for the tavern is the hub of the town's doings. In the small-town tavern there are no bars—they were the abominable invention of brewers; there is only a cluster of rooms where you may sit as long as you please, and spend what you please, and where whatever you want is brought to you, and no tip for the service is expected or desired. There, of an evening, the shopkeepers and town councillors gather, and there they discuss local and national affairs, and play billiards and darts, and fix the details of the flower show, and the benefit for poor old Robinson's widow, and exchange funny and not-funny stories; and the landlord is one of themselves, and they use his house as their own. They are all friends, and the landlord himself is often a town councillor.

Usually the place has a garden and a bowling-green, and there are serious annual events—the *Red Lion* bowls club plays the *Green Dragon* team; the darts team of the tap-room plays the darts team of another house; the billiards champion plays the billiards champion from the next town; and for any recognised townsman who has met disaster a concert is arranged, or a sweepstake; and for all these competitions and benefits, the landlord is always treasurer. He is as firmly trusted as the vicar or the mayor, and he is more often chosen for the office because he is by his position more accessible and by temperament more informal.

But the days of tavern and pub are numbered. They are to be supplanted by the club, or, perhaps, by the family café. The working-men's club we have had with us for some time, but, full of amenities as it may be, it

wants something. Inns and taverns, like wine and furniture and pottery, need something more than making: before they are fully and effectively what they should be they need a period for ageing, for acquiring a surface and a polish. The inn and tavern have had that; the club is still in adolescence, still in the village-hall stage; a little sharp and joint-y and chill. The family café, too, is with us, and may be seen in the experiments of Messrs. Barclay, at the *Rosemary Branch*, in Camberwell, and *Merlin's Cave*, in Clerkenwell. These are cafés of the Continental kind, without bars or obscured windows. They serve lunch, tea, dinner, and supper in the restaurant, and drinks in the buffet; and another department serves cooked food for outdoor service. They are well decorated, and each has a dance-hall or concert-room. They have already made a success in their neighbourhoods as family centres, and they are likely to be the models for others if the new recommendations pass into law and the public-house is condemned. But at present, like the workmen's club, they have not yet settled into our landscape; they have not yet lived with men and acquired a patina of association. Nor have they any of the architectural grace of our older inns. They have not, as these places have, the air of having happened: one is certain that they have been made. But they are a great and desirable improvement upon the pub, and to any complaints there is an obvious answer. Everything at some time has had to be new: give these places time and they will surely grow into our consciousness as the inn did, and become the traditional centre and rendezvous of their locality. And dark and fustiness and cramped quarters they will replace by light and space and air and brilliance.

The music-hall is dead; it has been killed by restaurant cabaret; and the pub, where cabaret first began in the form of the sing-song and music-hall, is to die too,

and give place to the club and the café cabaret. The new village café-tavern will be not only a rendezvous and place of refreshment, but also, in the full sense, a place of entertainment, which was its original purpose. And so we arrive, as progress often makes us arrive, just where we were four hundred years ago.

CHAPTER VI

PRESENT AND FUTURE

THE condition and conduct of the inn has always rested, for good or ill, with the guests. The more exigent the guests, the sharper and brighter the inn, and the more easy-going the guests the more slap-dash the inn.

That the English inn of to-day is by no means all it might be is the fault entirely of these easy and tolerant times. We have lost the habit (which in the past was much abused) of complaint; and we have become so submissive under bureaucrats' orders, and the orders of self-appointed Movements, and the bellowing of advertisers, that when there is any question of our rights we seem to become paralysed. You may see in the dining-room of many an inn a whole crowd of sturdy Englishmen tamely eating, and paying smartly for, a dinner that would be approved only by a starving peasant. You will see them eating cheese fit only for the mouse-trap. You will see them waiting meekly under bad service. You will see them swallowing wine of the roughest *vin ordinaire* type, and paying a vintage-claret price for it. You will see them drinking, without the slightest apparent disgust, coffee worse even than that of the London coffee-stall. And then you will see them not only pay the bill without complaint, but actually tip the waiter or waitress for the insult of the meal and the scornful service. They have reached, indeed, such depths of submissiveness, that when a less easy fellow does disturb the dining-room with a complaint, they stare at him as at a human pig unfit for decent society.

A large number of them, of course, don't know good food from bad, and couldn't tell a 1921 Moselle from a manufactured colonial white wine. They have stopped at the inn to eat, not to dine, and the innkeeper guesses this, and loses interest in his job. They are blind to good furniture and tasteful decoration and delicate flavours. I stayed recently at a hotel in Salisbury whose bedroom was furnished with an excellent Heal suite. All along the rails of the bed, all along the dressing-table and the bedside chest, some odious beast had laid his burning cigarettes. He is a common type of inn-guest, and has left his trail in many beautiful inns. So long as he remains unmurdered I suppose we cannot justly complain of the dreary furniture of many inn bedrooms, and the drearier food.

Still, those of us who do know something about food have a distinct case, and if only we would remember that we are good Englishmen we could easily effect an improvement. It wants only one or two here and there to raise their voices, and the whole wretched conspiracy of Anything-Will-Do would collapse in alarm. It needs every day one strong man in each inn to send for the manager, and to sit at his table until the manager comes; and then to do to the manager of that inn what the late Arnold Daly, the American actor, did to the manager of a famous West End restaurant, where I was his guest; and our inns would soon pull themselves together.

Arnold Daly was an Irishman, and had a "temperament." He was one of those men who Say Things and Do Things. It was he who, after a dispute with his leading lady, walked off the stage in the second act of a Bernard Shaw play, left her in mid-air, and went home. And, in the middle of a public performance in Boston, openly reproved an incompetent member of the company, and beseeched him, for God's sake, to *act* the part. He died in a fire.

He had come to see me to discuss a possible play, and we were to discuss it at lunch. On the occasion of the lunch the —— Restaurant was crowded, and service was slow. After waiting some ten minutes, during which Daly's hands and feet were playing tattoos, a waiter came to us with an air of wanting to get away at once. Daly ordered cocktails and lunch. Ten minutes later some *hors d'œuvres* were slid on to the table. Daly looked at them, and looked at me, and looked about the room. Then with a thrust of the arm, he grabbed a waiter who was passing to another table. "Come here! Listen—I ordered cocktails. You've served the *hors d'œuvres*, but where's the cocktails? What's the Big Idea?" Under Daly's eye the waiter scurried out. The cocktails came. Daly called the waiter back. "Come here! Listen—I want some wine. Bring the wine-list. And bring it now. And I want the wine before the coffee." He gave the order. Between the *hors d'œuvres* and the next dish, there was a long, long pause. No food, no wine. Daly had an air of praying, either to God or Satan. At last there came the *sole colbert*, but no wine. We were half-way through this before it did come. Daly looked at the wine-waiter —just *looked*; with the result that the waiter, in serving the wine, spilled half a glass on the table-cloth. Daly, in anything but a stage-whisper, said to me: "So this is what you London folk call a good restaurant, is it? This is one of your famous restaurants—eh? Wull, I've been about a bit, and this is the most bum place I've struck so far."

Between the *filet mignon* and the bird there was the longest pause of all. Three times Daly stopped our waiter, and twice he stopped other waiters, with cold and bitter words; but all he got was: "Yes, sir. Right, sir," and finally a testy "All *right*, sir—it's just coming!" On the receipt of that Daly looked at me, and looked at

the ceiling, and grabbed the edges of the table with both hands. The set of his mouth looked as though he were biting bullets. His eyes blazed. I watched him with some apprehension. I felt that he was working up to a Big Scene, and I don't fit into Big Scenes. I murmured something about "an extra rush to-day," but he wasn't listening, and I was powerless to stop the explosion.

When it came, I was very glad that I hadn't been able to stop it. All the things that I had been wanting for years to say to restaurant-and-inn-people, and to those other insolents—the creatures who live in the rabbit-hutches that serve as theatre box-offices—were uttered more strongly even than I had thought them.

After three murderous glances about the room Daly lifted his arm, and brought it down to the table with an almighty crash. The table rocked: a glass fell off. Instantly there was silence. Guests stopped eating; waiters stopped serving; all heads were turned to our table. When Daly was certain that he had secured attention—he gave the scene the actor's counted pause—he said firmly and clearly: "I want a waiter." Three waiters swam to us from different points. He waited until the last had arrived; then said: "Which of you is the waiter of this table?" One of them moved forward "——, sir?" "Oh. You're the waiter supposed to be waiting at this table, are you? Wull, get the head-waiter and *bring him here*!" They scurried away, and from some obscure resort the head-waiter was produced. Daly looked at him with an air of study, and the man moved a little farther from the table. "So you're the head-waiter, eh?" "Sir? Have you any complaint to——" "Not to you. Go fetch the manager of this joint and *bring him here*!" "Pardon, sir, but——" Daly leaned forward, "Go—*fetch*—the—MANAGER. Is that clear?" The arm was uplifted for another almighty crash, but by instant obedience the head-waiter stopped its fall.

Daly was now looking as serene as though he had eaten the perfect lunch in perfect surroundings. The rest of the room continued to stare, and began to murmur, some in disapproval, others in obvious admiration. When the manager came Daly gave him an extra-special Look. Then: "You're the manager, eh? . . . Say, is this joint a restaurant, or what is it? Listen——" He got up. "My friend and I have been sitting in this bum hole an hour and a half. We came to lunch, and so far we've had nothing but a few mouthfuls, bad service, and impudence. Let me give you a bit of advice. Before you try to open a restaurant, take a few lessons. First, some insolent hog at the door tried to dictate to me where I'd sit. Then I ordered cocktails, and they came after the *hors d'œuvres*. Your *hors d'œuvres* were about good enough for an East Side hashery. I ordered wine. The god-damn knock-kneed fool you call a wine-waiter served it half an hour after I'd ordered it. And then spilt it. We've waited at least fifteen minutes between each course, and not one of 'em was worth waiting a minute for. Hasn't your mother ever told you what a *filet mignon* ought to be? Eh? I've made a continual complaint to the waiter, and all I get is, *Yes, sir. All right.* And then you have the god-damn impudence to call this joint a *restaurant*. If I was you, I'd go right back to circus life. As soon as I'm home I'll just let the American Press know the kind of thing you think a restaurant is. I guess that's about all. I'm now waiting for sweets, and possibly a little cheese; and then, if it won't put your pack of dormice too much on the stretch, I shall want coffee. Do I, between ourselves, do I get any service or not?"

The manager, whose face at first was managerial and was now that of a defaulting private receiving advice from the sergeant, bowed, expressed sorrow, summoned the head-waiter, and fled. The head-waiter hovered.

Daly smiled pleasantly, and said: "Still waiting for sweets, boy. But I got no appointment till six-thirty." The head-waiter turned to chase sweets, but Daly stopped him with a bark. "*Cummere*! Listen—it won't be no use of your going through the motions of making out a bill. I'm gonna pay for this lunch just what I think it was worth. And *that* won't be anything to upset your ledgers. And you can please yourself what you do about it. Now send my waiter, and if I have any more of his damned all-rights, I'll *smash* him to the *flure*!"

For the remaining fifteen minutes of the lunch we had three waiters in constant attendance. When we left, Daly waved the bill aside, threw three half-crowns on the table, and walked out. The staff stood aside, and let him go.

Oh, for one touch of him at some of the country inns I have lunched and dined at. England has need of him, particularly in the inns of the North and the inns of the Midlands, and almost all seaside hotels.

Mr. John Prioleau, the motoring expert of the *Evening Standard* (a friend of mine says that he always feels that John Prioleau is wasting himself as a writer on motoring: his name so obviously discloses that he should really be *primo ballerino assoluto* in some Imperial Ballet), Mr. Prioleau, who is always on the road, has often touched on the shortcomings of our inn dining-rooms. Writing recently on the matter, he not only touched but thwacked:

> I am accused of frequently gibing at country hotel cooking. I cannot let this pass. I let many winged and envenomed arrows go by, every week, but I cannot lie down under the charge of gibing at the cooking in certain British country hotels. I do not gibe. I curse and abuse and detest. Gibing would be idiotic. It would imply ridicule and scorn, and bad

cooking is no laughing matter. It is a sin and a crime and the begetter of gloom and despondency. No calamity is quite so far-reaching in its fell results as the kind of bad cooking you sometimes get in a British hotel. To say that I or any earnest motorist gibes at it is positively libel.

But, of course, it is useless to curse and abuse and detest the bad meals of an inn unless you do the cursing and abusing and detesting to the manager's face; and as the bad meals still go on, it must mean that we have no Dalys in England. Commercial travellers, in their special section of the inn, are insistent upon having what they want at a fair price—even if they do want, as they do, such abominations as steak-and-onions-with-tea—and by their insistence they always get it. But the regular traveller sits meekly under every kind of abuse. Among my own acquaintance I know of only two people who annoy country inns by sending dishes away, and refusing to pay for a lunch that hasn't been eaten—my friend, J. A. R. Cairns, and myself. Not that it has much effect. I don't know how Cairns does it, but I do it so gently and nicely that the manager thinks that it doesn't really matter. He only loses a little money. But if a lot of people did it, and did it forcefully, he would begin to lose a lot of money, and then he would begin to set himself right.

The method of protest is simple. It has to be, because I haven't Daly's sense of the theatre. When the bill comes, you simply say that you won't pay it. You pay for what you've been able to eat—a roll and butter, and possibly soup. You put down a shilling, and your card, and you tell the manager, politely, that if he wants the rest he must sue for it. Good afternoon.

But it needs more vigour and heat than I can command to achieve any real and lasting effect.

Daly's suggestion to the manager of that restaurant, that he should take a few lessons was, unconsciously, a pointed remark. It missed that immediate situation, because the metropolitan restaurant business does afford some kind of curriculum of study for the young who wish to enter it. But this is not so with inn-keeping; and it is queer that his business, so interwoven all these centuries with the daily life of the people, is a business for which no training is considered necessary. In Southern Europe the business of country inn-keeping is regarded as a serious career, a matter for study, matriculation, and graduation. But in England innkeepers seem to happen, and I have never been able to discover how a man becomes an innkeeper—whether he rises to it from the position of publican, descends to it from the position of chef (the latter, the dining-room whispers), or turns to it as men in another sphere of life turn to reading for the Bar. It seems that one week a man is a butler, or footman, or police-sergeant, or ocean-steward, or boxing-champion, or bo'sun, and next week he is an innkeeper.

There are no Postal Courses on How to Become an Innkeeper, and until a few years ago there was not, I think, one serious book on the subject. There is now: there is Mr. Alexander Part's valuable and eminently entertaining work, *The Art and Practice of Inn-Keeping*. This book lays down, no doubt, a counsel of perfection, but now that it exists there is really no excuse for an innkeeper not at least *trying* to attain to sixty per cent. of its counsel. I have always had sympathy with the difficulties of the innkeeper's calling, and after reading this book my sympathy is increased. But then, inn-keeping being the most trying of all callings, one expects that only very exceptional men—men far superior to you or me—will go into it. One sees them as already marked out from the common run of people,

and so looks for results from them that one would neither hope for nor expect from others. We are surprised and pleased when the talented man achieves a supreme work; we are surprised and disgusted when the genius doesn't.

Here is Mr. Part's description of what the good innkeeper should be:

> He must be genial, not easily discouraged, firm and sure of himself, watchful as a cat over himself, as well as over his staff and his customers. He must have a broad outlook, must be a ready speaker, and still readier listener. He must be house-proud, with an eye trained to notice small detail, and a student of human nature. He must be active, methodical, and good-tempered under trying conditions; retentive of memory for a fact or a face, and his character, both in public and private, must be above reproach. He must try to emulate the example of a man of whom I have heard, who was a churchwarden for seventeen years, and still remained a Christian. His patience must be beyond that of the ass. He must be a handy man, and a sportsman in the widest sense of the words. He is expected to know a great deal of law; to be a good accountant, a born caterer, an expert chef, a good housekeeper, a good buyer and seller, and an encyclopædia of general information. The man who combines all these qualities will, even then, fail to be successful if he does not care for the business —in other words, unless he really loves playing the part of host. I care not how primitive your accommodation is . . . it is your welcome, and your air, that count most. Think of your guests by name and characteristics, not by numbers.

You see from this that about ten times as many

abilities are asked of the innkeeper as are asked of any other business man. The manufacturer, the merchant, the stockbroker, the horse-breeder, the garage-keeper, the grocer, the butcher, and so on, have to know but one business: the innkeeper has to be a specialist in a dozen. Further, many stupid people can achieve success in this or that business; many of the "important" City men are incredibly stupid creatures; but no stupid person could last three months in the business of innkeeping.

Law alone—a mere side-matter which the innkeeper is supposed to take in his stride—is enough to frighten the interested amateur from following the profession. Mr. Part gives in his book a brief digest of the law that he must know: quite brief—a mere twenty-eight demy octavo pages. Other chapter headings give a bird's-eye view of the other little matters of which he must have not only knowledge but expert knowledge: "Catering," "Catering for Large Parties," "The Lay-out of the Kitchen," "Purchasing," "The House and its Upkeep," "The Cellar," "Stock-taking," "Book-keeping and Publicity," "Side Lines," "The Staff and its Duties," and so on. He cannot, like other business men, hire experts for his various departments, and leave those departments in the charge of the expert. He must know the work of every department, and be able to do it as well as the experts, on penalty of the expert doing *him*. He must unite in himself butler, cook, garage attendant, housemaid, parlourmaid, waiter, housekeeper, hall-porter, night-porter, valet and confidential adviser; for no man will take orders about his work from another man who does not know how that work should be done.

So, if innkeeping attracts you, and you are thinking of taking over an inn, I advise you, before you sign the agreements, to read Mr. Part's book. If your interest

survives that reading then you may enter upon your new business in the confidence that you are a born innkeeper.

Holding that book in mind, I always count twenty before thinking harsh things of any given inn; but usually, on reaching twenty-one, reason permits me to pursue my thought. Many men become innkeepers who possess only one or two of the necessary qualifications, and many who have been good innkeepers become slack and allow their staffs to become slack. My chief complaint is against the kitchen and the cellar, and there is no excuse for slackness here. If an innkeeper tells me (as they do tell me) that it is a matter of the utmost difficulty to get a good cook, I only say that I don't believe him. After one of my periodic outbursts in the Press against the inn (they are the kind of outbursts that one only makes against something one loves), I received forty-five letters from experienced cooks who were looking for a job that afforded the interest and scope of cook to an inn. Some were from women and some from men. All complained of the difficulty of getting a post which allowed them a fairly free hand. Those inns to which they had applied, wanted, apparently, only the routine cook, who could be got cheaply. One letter was from an ex-soldier who had been in charge of an officers' mess-kitchen. Given an inn with a good kitchen-garden, he undertook to provide lunches and dinners that would bring visitors back again and again. One woman was so certain of the success of the unusual meals she would serve that she was willing to take a post without salary until results were shown. She claimed that she could serve as perfect a *country* meal as the best London restaurants served for towns, and that a well-served country meal would be more warmly received than the shabby *table d'hôte* meal. Her main interest was the kitchen, but she wanted also control of the "front of the house," for, as she rightly

said, and as Mr. Part insists, "what is the use of my sending up a good meal if the guests don't sit down to it in happy mood—and how could they if they had been received by the usual frozen-faced reception-clerk?" Another woman would serve the local dishes of the county in which her inn was set—Cornish pasty, or Sussex pie, or Norfolk stew.

It was clear from these letters that there are a number of intelligent men and women with a serious sense of the business, but it seems that there is no opening for them unless they can put down several thousand pounds for purchase of a house of their own. A great pity, since almost every other traveller has nothing but execration for that 4s. 0d. lunch and 6s. 6d. dinner. During a tour last summer I ate that lunch and dinner, item for item, in Cornwall, Norfolk, Berkshire, Sussex and Shropshire. It never varies to the district or the season: it is the same winter and summer. Here, for example, is the menu of a hotel on the South Coast. This was offered as a *summer lunch*. As you see, it is really a winter dinner of the Jorrocks period. The spelling is the hotel's:

HORS D'OEUVRES VARIE.
MULLIGATAWNEY SOUP.

FRIED WHITING.

ROAST PORK. APPLE SAUCE.
ROAST BEEF.
ROAST CHICKEN.

POTATOES. CABBAGE.

FRUIT TART AND CUSTARD.
PRUNES AND CUSTARD.

CHEESE AND BISCUITS.
COFFEE.

How is it that our inns have never heard of cold soup and iced coffee for the summer? How is it that they have never heard of the omelette—that excellent dish which the kitchen can so easily and quickly prepare for the unexpected guest? One does not want them to know Francatelli and Escoffier and Soyer, but they should know Mrs. Beeton. There are in Mrs. Beeton, I calculate, more than a thousand recipes. Our inns seem to be run throughout the year on six of them—the same six—and the kitchen-utensil most in use is neither pot nor pan nor casserole, but tin-opener.

It was, I think, the innkeeper who discovered that a tin can be opened in a few seconds, who started the trouble. From shirking his kitchen-business by tin-opening, he sank to shirking other departments. He neglected to welcome his guests, or even to see that they were welcomed by one of his hirelings. From that he has sunk to practical jokes—to putting in his bedrooms bells that do not ring, or bells that do ring and are never answered. He has discovered that one kind of soup will do for his customers, and it does. He gives it different names, but it is always the same soup. He has fish in his bill of fare, but from my collection of bills of fare I gather that the waters of this island afford no other fish than sole and plaice. The same with cheese. Last week, at the end of one of these mortifying lunches, hoping that I might yet get something to eat, I asked the maid what cheese they had. She said "Cheese." I said, "Yes, but what cheese—Stilton, Camembert, Roquefort, Cheshire, or——" "No, sir. Only *Cheese*."

A French innkeeper is delighted to meet a guest who discusses the *carte* intelligently, and orders a special and sensibly-planned meal; it is a demonstration of mutual interest in one of the graces of life. An English innkeeper positively dislikes such a guest, and sees nothing

in him but a man who is disturbing the routine of tin-opening.

Why cannot the inn return to the ancient and honourable custom of the "ordinary" or, as the would-be cook suggests, to the serving of country dishes, instead of its foolish and dreary imitation of a French meal? And why cannot it serve a good light lunch instead of a bad heavy lunch? Good bread and good butter, good cheese and a good salad, make as satisfactory a lunch as the most fastidious could desire; and for the very hungry a cut from the family joint would be much more worth the 4s. 0d. than the Henry Ford "lunch." But bread and cheese are seldom to be had in their goodness.

Then the breakfast of the average inn is, for me, one of life's minor annoyances. It ought to be generally known that tastes in the matter of breakfast differ widely. There should be no such thing as a *table d'hôte* breakfast, and no such charge as 3s. 6d. for it, because no breakfast is worth that. Breakfast should be *à la carte*, so that those like myself who prefer tea-and-toast or coffee-and-rolls could have them at a proper charge, and those who like the substantial breakfast could order such items as they wanted at a price for each item.

Then there's coffee. Most inns can make tea, but their coffee is usually a black and bitter curse. Mr. Alexander Part agrees with me. "Of all the dreadful concoctions," he says, "to be found in the average hotel and inn, coffee, particularly that served after dinner and after lunch, is uniformly the worst. Three ways of making coffee are practised, but as two are abominable, I will refrain from describing them." I wish he had described them, if only for our relief; for I am sure that the whole three cannot be more abominable than my imagination of the process that produces the inky liquid called coffee. The main trouble is, of

course, that they use only the cheapest stuff from the lowest kind of store, and put even that into the pot by the egg-spoon instead of by the table-spoon.

And then salad. They seem to have no understanding of this. The simplest cookery book gives recipes for a variety of salads, but to them the word covers but one thing—a meagre plate of a leaf or two of lettuce, a slice of beetroot, half a tomato, and some slices of cucumber.

Another matter for complaint is the scarcity of fruit, and the display of ignorance in serving what there is. Most inns have a fruit garden, and a mystery deeper than any of Mr. Austin Freeman's is, What do innkeepers do with the fruit they grow? I say is; I should have said was. I solved it last summer. I was lunching at an inn whose dining-room overlooked a full garden. I saw red and black currants, cherries, strawberries, and gooseberries. The menu named "Fruit salad," and I had hopes, though experience should have taught me not to be so foolish. Of course, when the fruit salad came, it was the usual plate of glucose, with the usual bits of Australian pineapple and Californian peach. I challenged the landlord on this, and asked him why he could not use his fruit garden at his tables. His naïve reply left me speechless. "Serve it at the tables! Why, I sell that to the market at a good price. Wouldn't pay me to serve it at the tables." The fool couldn't see that it would have paid him a hundred-fold; that those few inns that do really serve home-produce are known wherever motorists and walkers meet. He was one of those who have no right to be keeping inns; they should be doing kerbside stockbroking.

If, spurning the tinned fruit salad, you demand *fresh* fruit, the best that they offer, after giving you a wondering look, is usually imported apples, imported pears, imported grapes, and a selection of last year's nuts fit to lie with John Brown's body. Often they are unable

to produce anything fresh. Even when they do rise to serving home-grown fruit, they make a mess of it. They bring it to the table *via* the kitchen—a place it should never see. In how many inns can you get raspberries and loganberries and mulberries in their natural state? Yet it is only in that state, as it comes from the bush or the tree, that fruit gives its true flavour. Plums, currants, apricots, even the ordinary gooseberry, should never be buried in a tart or condemned to the abomination of stewing. They should be served on a dessert-stand. Thus served they make an enticing picture to the eye, and, eaten fresh, they complete on the palate the promise held out to the eye, as all food should do. There is no excuse, other than ignorance, for treating them otherwise.

Nor is there the slightest excuse for the wine-list of the average inn. Even if the landlord has not a ready sale for good wines, there is no reason why he should not have them in his cellar against the coming of the random customer of taste. Wine is not milk or meat. But even quite large inns and hotels seem unable to produce a good bottle. The wine-list is almost as standardized as the 4s. 0d. lunch. We are all familiar with it. Dickens had one test which he always applied to an inn on entering it; by this test, he said, it proclaimed its quality. His first glance was for the dining-room cruet. If the oil were cloudy, the vinegar furry, the pepper-pot clogged, and the anchovy sauce were wearing what he called a flannel waistcoat of decomposition, this state of things would be reflected in all other departments of the inn. My own test is to look at the wine-list. A glance at that is sufficient to tell you whether the innkeeper knows his job. It seldom yields any surprises. In ninety inns out of a hundred you will find the same list. It goes something like this:

"Big Tree" Chablis.
Barsac.
St. Emilion.
Graves.
Beaune.
"Emu" Burgundy.
Moseloro.
Ackerman Laurance.
Golden Guinea.

No year, no shipper; just bare and non-committal, and, of course, totally uninteresting.

And that, I think (as Arnold Daly said), is about all. In most other matters the inn has responded very well to the twentieth-century reopening of the roads. Here and there one finds the dull and dirty inn, but none, in my experience, in the condition of the Ipswich *White Horse*, as Dickens described it at the peak of the coaching age:

> The *Great White Horse* is famous in the neighbourhood, in the same degree as a prize ox, or country-paper-chronicled turnip, or unwieldy pig—for its enormous size. Never were such labyrinths of uncarpeted passages, such clusters of mouldy ill-lighted rooms, such huge numbers of small dens for eating or sleeping in, beneath any one roof. . . . The corpulent man, preceding them down a long dark passage, ushered them into a large badly-furnished apartment, with a dirty grate, in which a small fire was making a wretched attempt to be cheerful, but was fast sinking beneath the dispiriting influence of the place.

Or in the condition of the *Golden Cross* of that age:

> We went to the *Golden Cross*, then a mouldy sort of establishment in a close neighbourhood. A waiter

showed me into the coffee-room, and a chambermaid introduced me to my small bedchamber, which smelt like a hackney coach and was shut up like a family vault.

Both the *White Horse* and the *Golden Cross* now use these curses as advertisement, which suggests—as one has already suspected—that there is a virtue in being libelled by the right person. Both can afford to do so, for the *White Horse* is now the bright and busy hotel of its town, and the *Golden Cross*, one of the two survivors of London's mid-Victorian hotels, has adapted itself admirably to its position in the full tide of human existence. Whether the law of libel was being so constantly invoked in Dickens' day as now, I don't know, but any modern writer describing, no matter how truthfully, an inn or hotel in these terms would be certain of receiving a writ; and I am surprised that Dickens escaped. For, in the moment of writing, I recall that another man, at about that time, did receive a writ. Surtees described a certain hotel, at Liverpool or Manchester—I forget which—as the worst hotel he had ever stayed at. The hotel brought an action against him, and, despite the testimony of many witnesses who showed that it was a thoroughly unsatisfactory place, the hotel was awarded damages of one hundred pounds. After which, Surtees, having occasion to mention a known inn, described it, ironically, as the finest in the kingdom; putting a footnote to the page, explaining why he dared not describe it in any other terms. But perhaps Dickens, at that time, was too big a man to try a bout with; or perhaps *his* condemnation was just the inverted publicity that these concerns needed. He was at once the celebrant of the inn and its stern critic, and probably his attention in either mood was worth having. He had a keen eye for the good inn and a keen eye for the graceless and fly-blown, and

a glance at his many inn-scenes proves that the inns of those days—the supposed days of inn-perfection—were then, as now, good and bad, and that the majority then, as now, were neither.

Much credit for the rescue of the inn from its railway-age dilapidation is due to the Trust House company. This company found many inns, once beautiful, in the state described by Crabbe. With the help of a group of enthusiastic architects, it set to work upon them with the happy idea of modernising them, while retaining whatever in the original was beautiful or notable. This was a delicate job, but the architects did it with nice tact. They did not attempt to revive the old because it was old, but because it was beautiful, and aptly suited to inn-purposes; and by their efforts, many a shabby inn, with outer walls of peeling plaster, and inner walls of tattered paper, has been made to reveal beauties and utilities which had been hidden by the false taste and commercial demands of the nineteenth century.

For example, the ball-room at the Shrewsbury *Lion*—De Quincey's ball-room—had been allowed to become a commercial stock-room. The Trust House company has returned it to its true business. It was designed by the Adam brothers as a ball-room, and it was a good ball-room; as fine a room as ever they made. It was not designed as a stock-room, and therefore was an indifferent stock-room. Again, the *Red Lion* of Colchester, a jewel of fifteenth-century work, presented for years a front of wretched plaster. When the Trust House people got to work on it, the plaster front was removed, and behind it was found what you now see—an ornate front of carved oak. Their architects have achieved equally successful restoration at the *Dorset Arms* of Withyam, where some beautiful interior work was suspected, and discovered, behind varnished match-board and unsightly wall-paper; at the *Bull* of Long

Melford, where layers of wall-paper covered the original fifteenth-century work of the dining-room; and at the *White Swan* of Stratford, where, behind some imposed woodwork, in what is now the lounge, was found a series of mural paintings of 1560, illustrating scenes from the Apocrypha.

Having restored these places, they did not stop at that; they infused them with a modern spirit of efficiency, brightness, and scrupulous cleanliness, and so set a useful example to those inns that thought there was still some virtue in being "old-fashioned." Starting operations in the Home Counties, they now control inns in almost every English county and a number of Scottish counties. Similar companies have also done good work in this matter of rejuvenating and modernising; and, thanks to their efforts, most inns now have more than one bath-room to twelve bedrooms.

In these days, when a thing is no sooner modern than it is out-moded by the neo-modern, it is perhaps idle to reflect upon the future of the inn. But it is clear that the inn as we know it, and have these many years known it, will soon disappear. The pub, as I have said, is already doomed, and will be replaced by the social club or the Continental cafê, and the inn will quickly follow. Speed will kill it. Those old inn-yards that were built for mail and stage-coaches, though they have been cleverly transformed into garages, have never been really suitable to that business, and they will, of course, be utterly useless when the Moth plane displaces the car.

The new inn is already in sketchy being. All over England is springing up the country-house hotel, called, not inn or hotel, but by a still earlier name; the word first used for the monastic establishments that sheltered the wayfarer—"guest-house." Sometimes these guest-houses are old manor-houses, or rectories; sometimes

they are large villas newly built at either end of arterial or by-pass roads. They have not the spirit of the inn; indeed, they are apt to be a little bleak in atmosphere, due, perhaps, to the greenness of their growth. They approximate rather to the good-class boarding-house or private hotel of the seaside. Nor have they any of the life of the inn: little bustle of going and coming, and none of the "open-house" feeling. Mostly they are run by women, along with the Wayside Luncheries, Celestial Tea Gardens, and Kwaint Koffy Kottages. I have tried one or two, and have found the third-rate inn rather more satisfactory.

New as they are, I do not give them a very long life. The larger sort—the country-house with a good deal of ground for a safe landing-place—may survive, but the smaller ones will disappear with the old inns. Assuming that the roads will still be used, I fancy that for every half-dozen existing inns there will be one fairly large hotel of the Strand Palace sort. This will not be on the roadside, or in the village, but in the town, and it will not exist in large numbers, because there will be little need for it. The more general means of transit will be the air, and there will be special air hotels. As distance will be a mere matter of minutes, they will occur only at wide intervals in such places as popular taste may dictate. They will be large and modern. They will have a landing-roof, a staff of air mechanics, and such brisk service as the times will demand. They will have central-heating, a bath-room to every bedroom, a restaurant, a grill-room, a commercial room, a Palm Lounge, bands, dance-hall, wireless and television screens. In short, they will be American hotels.

The inn has adapted itself to many changes, but it will not be able to adapt itself to this. As soon as the air becomes everybody's road, those inns that happen to be in the selected spots will be able to do nothing

but pull down and rebuild in accordance with the new idea. Those that are outside the air-track will have to close, and possibly become, as many did in the railway-age, private houses.

And so, farewell the inn. There may be some who will regret its passing, but life is a series of adjustments, of getting used to what is, while we are still regretting what was; and before we know where we are we shall be wondering how we ever put up with its easy, intimate homeliness. We shall congratulate ourselves on having escaped out of the Dark Ages. The old will tell tales of having cans of hot water brought to their bedrooms. They will tell of going four days without a bath, despite thirty desperate dashes to the bath-room. They will tell how, if you wanted a meal, you had to take it within a given two hours fixed by the inn, or go without. They will tell of the standardised lunch. They will tell of the game of Bedroom Bell, played between guest and servants, the game being to see who gave way first, the Ringer or the Rung; a game that guests seldom won. They will tell of the desiccated drawing-rooms for Ladies Only. And the young will sit and wonder why the old fools were so spineless and so rooted in custom as to accept these things.

But, in the meantime, while we have nothing better, the inn is good, and this little book is salute to it. And if its passing will cause dismay to any considerable number, I need only repeat to each and all that a little display of English spirit will usually get you what you want. If you are sufficiently troublesome, somebody will certainly arise to provide for such as you, in odd corners of the country, an inn of the kind you like; even if it has only the fugitive location of the inn of Mr. Humphrey Pump.

J. AND J. GRAY, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH

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